

S E R M O N S

O N

Several Occasions.

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ON

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VOL II

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SERMONS, &c.

On *PSALM VIII.* 4.

WHAT IS MAN?

1. **N**AY, what am I? With God's assistance, I would consider myself. Here is a curious machine, "fearfully and wonderfully made." It is a little portion of *Earth*, the particles of which cohering, I know not how, lengthen into innumerable fibres, a thousand times finer than hairs. These crossing each other in all directions, are strangely wrought into membranes; And these membranes are as strangely wrought into arteries, veins, nerves, and glands; all of which contain various fluids, constantly circulating thro' the whole machine.

2. In order to the continuance of this circulation, a considerable quantity of *Air* is necessary. And this is continually taken into the habit, by an engine fitted for that very purpose. But as a particle of ethereal *Fire* is connected with every particle of air, (and a particle of

water too,) so both air, water, and fire, are received into the lungs together, where the fire is separated from the air and water, both of which are continually thrown out, while the fire extracted from them, is received into, and mingled with, the blood. Thus the human body is composed of all the four elements, duly proportioned and mixt together: The last of which constitutes the vital flame, whence flows the animal heat.

3. Let me consider this yet a little farther. Is not the primary use of the lungs to administer fire to the body, which is continually extracted from the air, by that curious fire-pump? By inspiration it takes in the air, water, and fire together. In its numerous cells, (commonly called air-vessels,) it detaches the fire from the air and water. This then mixes with the blood, as every air-vessel has a blood-vessel connected with it: And as soon as the fire is extracted from it, the air and water are thrown out by expiration.

4. Without this spring of life, this vital fire, there could be no circulation of the blood: Consequently no motion of any of the fluids, of the nervous fluid in particular: (If it be not rather, as is highly probable, this very fire we are speaking of.) Therefore there could not be any sensation;

sensation ; nor any muscular motion : I say there could be no circulation ; for the cause usually assigned for this, namely, the force of the heart, is altogether inadequate to the supposed effect. No one supposes the force of the heart in a strong man to be more than equal to the weight of three thousand pounds. Whereas it would require a force equal to the weight of a hundred thousand pounds, to propel the blood from the heart through all the arteries. This can only be effected by the ethereal fire contained in the blood itself, assisted by the elastic force of the arteries thro' which it circulates.

5. But beside this strange compound of the four elements, earth, water, air, and fire, I find something in me of a quite different nature, nothing akin to any of these. I find something in me that *thinks*, which neither earth, water, air, fire, nor any mixture of them, can possibly do? Something which sees, and hears, and smells, and tastes, and feels, all which are so many modes of thinking: It goes farther; having perceived objects by any of these senses, it forms inward ideas of them. It *judges* concerning them, it sees whether they agree or disagree with each other. It *reasons* concerning them, that is, infers one proposition from another. It *reflects* upon its own operations. It is endued with

imagination and memory: And any of its operations, judgment in particular, may be subdivided into many others.

6. But by what means shall I learn, in what part of my body this thinking principle is lodged? Some eminent men have affirmed, That it is "all in all, and all in every part." But I learn nothing from this: They seem to be words that have no determinate meaning. Let us then appeal, in the best manner we can, to our own experience. From this I learn, that this thinking principle is not lodged in my hands, or feet, or legs, or arms. It is not lodged in the trunk of my body. Any one may be assured of this by a little reflection. I cannot conceive that it is situated in my bones, or in any part of my flesh. So far as I can judge, it seems to be situated in some part of my head. But whether in the pineal gland, or in any part of the brain, I am not able to determine.

7. But farther. This inward principle, wherever it is lodged, is capable not only of thinking, but likewise of love, hatred, joy, sorrow, desire, fear, hope, &c. and a whole train of other inward emotions, which are commonly called *Passions* or *Affections*. They are stiled, by a general appellation, *the Will*, and are mixed and diversified a thousand ways. And they seem to

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be the only spring of action, in that inward principle I call *the Soul*.

8. But what is my *soul*? It is an important question, and not easy to be resolved.

“Hear’st thou submissive, but a lowly birth?
Some separate particles of finer earth?
A plain effect, which nature must beget,
As motion dictates, and as atoms meet?”

I cannot in any wise believe this. My reason recoils at it. I cannot reconcile myself to the thought, that the soul is either earth, water, or fire: Or a composition of all of them put together: Were it only for this plain reason—All these, whether separate or compounded in any possible way, are purely *passive* still. None of them has the least power of self-motion; none of them can move itself. “But, (says one,) does not that ship move.” Yes, but not of itself; it is moved by the water on which it swims. “But then the water moves.” True, but the water is moved by the wind, the current of air. “But the air moves.” It is moved by the ethereal fire, which is attached to every particle of it. And this fire itself is moved by the Almighty Spirit, the source of all the motion in the universe. But my soul has from Him an inward principle of motion, whereby it governs at pleasure every part of the body.

9. It

9. It governs every motion of the body: Only with this exception, which is a marvellous instance of the wise and gracious Providence of the great Creator. There are some motions of the body, which are absolutely needful for the continuance of life: Such as the dilation and contraction of the lungs, the systole and diastole of the heart, the pulsation of the arteries, and the circulation of the blood. These are not governed by me at pleasure: They do not wait the direction of my will. And it is well they do not. It is highly proper, that all the vital motions should be involuntary, going on whether we advert to them or not. Were it otherwise, grievous inconveniencies might follow. A man might put an end to his own life whenever he pleased, by suspending the motion of his heart or of his lungs: Or he might lose his life by mere inattention, by not remembering, not adverting to the circulation of his blood. But these vital motions being excepted, I direct the motion of my whole body. By a single act of my will, I put my head, eyes, hands, or any part of my body into motion: Altho' I no more comprehend how I do this, than I can comprehend, how the "Three that bear record in heaven are One."

10. But

10. But what am I? Unquestionably I am something distinct from my body. It seems evident, that my body is not necessarily included therein. For when my body dies I shall not die: I shall exist as really as I did before. And I cannot but believe, this self-moving, thinking principle, with all its passions and affections, will continue to exist, altho' the body be mouldered into dust. Indeed at present this body is so intimately connected with the soul, that I seem to consist of both. In my present state of existence, I undoubtedly consist both of soul and body. And so I shall again after the resurrection to all eternity.

11. I am conscious to myself of one more property, commonly called *Liberty*. This is very frequently confounded with the *Will*; but is of a very different nature. Neither is it a property of the will, but a distinct property of the soul, capable of being exerted with regard to all the faculties of the soul, as well as all the motions of the body. It is a power of self-determination, which altho' it does not extend to all our thoughts and imaginations, yet extends to our words and actions in general, and not with many exceptions. I am full as certain of this, that I am free, with respect to these, to speak or not to speak, to act or not to act, to do this

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or the contrary, as I am of my own existence. I have not only what is termed, a *liberty of contradiction*, a power to do or not to do, but what is termed, a *liberty of contrariety*, a power to act one way, or the contrary: To deny this would be to deny the constant experience of all human kind. Every one feels that he has an inherent power, to move this or that part of his body, to move it or not, and to move this way or the contrary, just as he pleases. I can, as I chuse, (and so can every one that is born of a woman,) open or shut my eyes, speak or be silent, rise or sit down, stretch out my hand, or draw it in, and use any of my limbs according to my pleasure, as well as my whole body. And altho' I have not an absolute power over my own mind, because of the corruption of my own nature, yet thro' the grace of God assisting me, I have a power to choose and do good, as well as evil. I am free to choose whom I will serve, and if I choose the better part, to continue therein even unto death.

12. " But tell me, frightened nature, what is death?
 Blood only stopt, and interrupted breath?
 The utmost limit of a narrow span?
 And end of motion, which with life began?"

Death is properly the separation of the soul from the body. Of this we are certain: But we are
 not

not certain, (at least in many cases,) of the time when this separation is made. Is it when respiration ceases, according to the well-known maxim, *Nullus spiritus, nulla vita*: "Where there is no breath, there is no life?" Nay, we cannot absolutely affirm this: For many instances have been known, of those whose breath was totally lost, and yet their lives have been recovered. Is it when the heart no longer beats? Or when the circulation of the blood ceases? Not so. For the heart may beat anew; and the circulation of the blood, after it is quite interrupted, may begin again. Is the soul separated from the body, when the whole body is stiff and cold as a piece of ice? But there have been several instances lately of persons who were thus cold and stiff, and had no symptoms of life remaining; who nevertheless, upon proper application, recovered both life and health. Therefore we can say no more, than that death is the separation of the soul and body: But in many cases, God only can tell the moment of that separation.

13. But what we are much more concerned to know, and deeply to consider is, the end of life: For what end is life bestowed upon the children of men? Why were we sent into the world? For one sole end, and for no other,

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To prepare for eternity. For this alone we live : For this, and no other purpose, is our life either given or continued. It pleased the all-wise God, at the season which he saw best, to arise in the greatness of his strength, and create the heavens and the earth, and all things that are therein. Having prepared all things for him, “ He created man in his own image, after his own likeness.” And what was the end of his creation ? It was one, and no other—That he might know, and love, and enjoy, and serve his great Creator to all eternity.

14. But, “ Man being in honour, continued not ; but became lower than even the beasts that perish.” He wilfully and openly rebelled against God, and cast off his allegiance to the Majesty of Heaven. Hereby he instantly lost both the favour of God, and the image of God, wherein he was created. As he was then incapable of obtaining happiness by the Old, God established a New Covenant with man : The terms of which were no longer, “ Do this and live,” but “ Believe and thou shalt be saved.” But still the end of man is one and the same ; only it stands on another foundation. For the plain tenor of it is, “ Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, whom God hath given to be the propitiation for thy sins, and thou shalt be saved,”

first

first from the guilt of sin, having redemption through his blood: then from the power, which shall have no more dominion over thee; and then from the root of it, into the whole image of God. And being restored both to the favour and image of God, thou shalt know, love, and serve him to all eternity. So that still the end of his life, the life of every man born into the world, is to know, love, and serve his great Creator.

15. And let it be observed, as this is the end, so it is the whole and sole end, for which every man upon the face of the earth, for which every one of *you* were brought into the world, and indued with a living soul. Remember! You were born for nothing else. You live for nothing else. Your life is continued to you upon earth, for no other purpose than this, that you may know, love, and serve God on earth, and enjoy him to all eternity. Consider! You were not created to please your Senses, to gratify your Imagination, to gain Money, or the praise of Men; to seek happiness in any created good, in any thing under the sun: All this is "walking in a vain shadow:" It is leading a restless, miserable life, in order to a miserable eternity. On the contrary, you were created for this, and for no other purpose, by seeking and finding

happiness in God on earth, to secure the glory of God in heaven. Therefore, let your heart continually say, "This one thing I do." Having one thing in view, remembering why I was born, and why I am continued in life. "I press on to the mark." I aim at the one end of my being, God: Even at "God in Christ reconciling the world to himself." He shall be my God for ever and ever, and my Guide even unto death.

Bradforth, May 2, 1788.

HEBREWS XI. 1.

Now Faith is the Evidence of Things not seen.

1. **F**OR many ages it has been allowed by sensible men, *Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuit prius insensu*: That is, "There is nothing in the understanding which was not first perceived by some of the senses." All the knowledge which we naturally have, is originally derived from our senses. And therefore those who want any sense, cannot have the least knowledge or idea of the objects of that sense: As they that never had sight, have not the least knowledge or conception of light or colours. Some indeed have of late years endeavoured to prove, that we have *innate ideas*, not derived from any of the senses, but coeval with the understanding. But this point has been now thoroughly discussed, by men of the most eminent sense and learning. And it is agreed by all impartial persons, that altho' some things are so plain and obvious, that we can very hardly avoid knowing them, as soon as we come to the use of our understanding, yet the knowledge even of these is not innate, but derived from some of our senses.

2. But there is a great difference between our senses, considered as the avenues of our knowledge. Some of them have a very narrow sphere of action: Some a more extensive one. By *feeling* we discern only those objects, that touch some part of our body; and consequently this sense extends only to a small number of objects. Our senses of *taste* and *smell*, (which some count species of *feeling*,) extend to fewer still. But on the other hand, our nobler sense of *hearing*, has an exceeding wide sphere of action: Especially in the case of loud sounds, as thunder, the roaring of the sea, or the discharge of cannon: The last of which sounds has been frequently heard at the distance of near an hundred miles. Yet the space to which the *hearing* itself extends is small, compared to that thro' which the *sight* extends. The *sight* takes in at one view, not only the most unbounded prospects on earth, but also the moon, and the other planets, the sun, yea, the fixt stars, though at such an immeasurable distance, that they appear no larger through our finest telescopes, than they do to the naked eye.

3. But still none of our senses, no not the sight itself, can reach beyond the bounds of this visible world. They supply us with such knowledge of the material world, as answers all the purposes

purposes of life. But as this was the design for which they were given, beyond this they cannot go. They furnish us with no information at all, concerning the *invisible world*.

4. But the wise and gracious Governor of the worlds, both visible and invisible, has prepared a remedy for this defect. He hath appointed *Faith* to supply the defect of sense; to take us up where sense sets us down, and help us over the great gulph. Its office begins where that of sense ends. Sense is an evidence of things that are seen; of the visible, the material world, and the several parts of it. Faith, on the other hand, is the "evidence of things not seen," of the *invisible world*: Of all those invisible things, which are revealed in the oracles of God. But indeed they reveal nothing, they are a mere *dead letter*, if they are "not mixt with faith in those that hear them."

5. In particular. Faith is an evidence to me, of the existence of that unseen thing my own soul. Without this I should be in utter uncertainty concerning it. I should be constrained to ask that melancholy question,

"Hear'st thou submissive, but a lowly birth,
Some separate particles of finer earth?"

But by Faith I know it is an immortal spirit, made in the image of God, in his natural and

moral image, “an incorruptible picture of the God of glory.” By the same evidence I know that I am now fallen short of the glorious image of God: Yea, that I, as well as all mankind, am “dead in trespasses and sins.” So utterly dead, that “in me dwelleth no good thing;” that I am inclined to all evil, and totally unable to quicken my own soul.

6. By Faith I know, that besides the souls of men, there are other orders of spirits: Yea, I believe that

“Millions of creatures walk the earth,
Unseen, whether we wake, or if we sleep.”

These I term *Angels*, and I believe part of them are holy and happy, and the other part wicked and miserable. I believe the former of these, the good angels, are continually sent of God, “to minister to the heirs of salvation;” who will be “equal to angels” by and by, although they are now a little inferior to them. I believe the latter, the evil angels, called in Scripture, *Devils*, united under one head, (termed in Scripture, *Satan*, emphatically, the *Enemy*, the *Adversary* both of God and man,) either range the upper regions, whence they are called “Princes of the power of the air;” or like him, “walk about the earth as roaring lions, seeking whom they may devour.”

7. But

7. But I know by Faith, that above all these, is the Lord, Jehovah, He that is, that was, and that is to come, that is God from everlasting and world without end : He that filleth heaven and earth : He that is infinite in power, in wisdom, in justice, in mercy, and holiness : He that created all things, visible and invisible, by the breath of his mouth, and still upholds them all, preserves them in being, “ by the word of his power :” And that governs all things, that are in heaven above, in earth beneath, and under the earth. By Faith I know, “ there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and that these three are one :” That the Word, God the Son, “ was made flesh,” lived and died for our salvation, rose again, ascended into heaven, and now sitteth on the right hand of the Father. By Faith I know that the Holy Spirit is the giver of all spiritual life ; of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost ; of holiness and happiness, by the restoration of that image of God, wherein we are created. Of all these things Faith is the evidence, the sole evidence to the children of men.

8. And as the information which we receive from our senses, does not extend to the *invisible world*, so neither does it extend to (what is
nearly

nearly related thereto,) the *eternal world*. In spite of all the instruction which either the sight or any of the senses can afford,

“ The vast, th’ unbounded prospect lies before us,
But clouds, alas ! and darkness rest upon it.”

Sense does not let in one ray of light, to discover,

“ The secrets of the illimitable deep.”

This, the *eternal world*, commences at death, the death of every individual person. The moment the breath of man goeth forth, he is an inhabitant of eternity. Just then time vanishes away, “ like as a dream, when one awaketh.” And here again, Faith supplies the place of sense, and gives us a view of things to come : At once it draws aside the veil which hangs between mortal and immortal beings. Faith discovers to us the souls of the righteous, immediately received by the holy angels, and carried by those ministering spirits, into Abraham’s bosom ; into the delights of paradise, the garden of God, where the light of his countenance perpetually shines : Where he converses not only with his former relations, friends, and fellow-soldiers, but with the saints of all nations, and all ages : With the glorious dead of ancient days : With the noble army of Martyrs, the Apostles, the Prophets, the Patriarchs, Abra-

ham, Isaac, and Jacob. Yea, above all this, he shall be with Christ, in a manner that he could not be, while he remained in the body.

9. It discovers likewise the souls of unholy men; seized the moment they depart from the quivering lips, by those ministers of vengeance, the evil angels, and dragged away to their own place. It is true, this is not the nethermost hell: They are not to be tormented there "before the time;" before the end of the world, when every one will receive his just recompence of reward. Till then they will probably be employed by their bad master, in advancing his infernal kingdom, and in doing all the mischief that lies in their power, to the poor, feeble children of men. But still, wherever they seek rest, they will find none. They carry with them their own hell, in the worm that never dieth; in a consciousness of guilt, and of the wrath of God, which continually drinks up their spirits; in diabolical, infernal tempers, which are essential misery; and in what they cannot shake off, no, not for an hour, any more than they can shake off their own being, that "fearful looking for of fiery indignation, which will devour God's adversaries."

10. Moreover, Faith opens another scene in the eternal world, namely, the coming of our
 Lord

Lord in the clouds of heaven, to “ judge both the quick and the dead.” It enables us to see the “ great white throne coming down from heaven, and Him that sitteth thereon, from whose face the heavens and the earth flee away, and there is found no place for them. We see the dead, small and great, stand before God. We see the books opened—and the dead judged, according to the things that are written in the books. We see the earth and the sea giving up their dead, and hell, (that is, the invisible world,) giving up the dead that were therein, and every one judged according to his works.”

II. By Faith we are also shewn the immediate consequences of the General Judgment. We see the execution of that happy sentence, pronounced upon those on the right hand, “ Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world!” After which the holy angels tune their harps and sing, “ Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the heirs of glory may come in!” And then shall they drink of the rivers of pleasure that are at God’s right hand for evermore. We see likewise the execution of that dreadful sentence, pronounced upon those on the left hand, “ Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,

fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And then shall the ministers of divine vengeance plunge them into "the lake of fire burning with brimstone, where they have no rest day or night, but the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever."

12. But beside the *invisible* and the *eternal* world, which are not seen, which are discoverable only by Faith, there is a whole system of things, which are not seen, which cannot be discerned by any of our outward senses. I mean, the *spiritual world*, understanding thereby the kingdom of God in the soul of man. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard this; neither can it enter into the heart of man to conceive the things of" this inferior kingdom, unless God revealed them by his Spirit. The Holy Spirit prepares us for his inward kingdom, by removing the veil from our heart, and enabling us to know ourselves as we are known of him: By "convincing us of sin," of our evil nature, our evil tempers, and our evil words and actions; all of which cannot but partake of the corruption of the heart from which they spring. He then convinces us of the desert of our sins, so that our mouth is stopped, and we are constrained to *pl* ad guilty before God. At the same time, we "receive the spirit of bondage unto fear;"
fear

fear of the wrath of God, fear of the punishment which we have deserved, and above all, fear of death, lest it should consign us over to eternal death. Souls that are thus convinced, feel they are so fast in prison, that they cannot get forth. They feel themselves at once altogether sinful, altogether guilty, and altogether helpless. But all this conviction implies a species of Faith, being "an evidence of things not seen." Nor indeed possible to be seen or known, till God reveals them unto us.

13. But still let it be carefully observed, (for it is a point of no small importance,) that this Faith is only the Faith of a servant, and not the Faith of a son. Because this is a point which many do not clearly understand, I will endeavour to make it a little plainer. The Faith of a servant implies a divine evidence of the *invisible* and the *eternal* world: Yea, and an evidence of the *spiritual world*, so far as it can exist without living experience. Whoever has attained this, the Faith of a servant, "feareth God, and escheweth evil:" Or, as it is expressed by St. Peter, "feareth God and worketh righteousness." In consequence of which, he *is* in a degree, (as the Apostle observes,) "accepted with him." Elsewhere he is described in those words, "He that feareth God, and keepeth his commandments."

mandments." Even one who has gone thus far in religion, who obeys God out of fear, is not in any wise to be despised, seeing " the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Nevertheless he should be exhorted, not to stop there; not to rest till he attains the adoption of sons; till he obeys him out of love, which is the privilege of all the *children* of God.

14. Exhort him to press on by all possible means, till he passes " from faith to faith;" from the faith of a *servant* to the faith of a *son*; from the spirit of bondage unto fear, to the spirit of childlike love: He will then have " Christ revealed in his heart," enabling him to testify, " The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*:" the proper voice of a child of God. He will then be " born of God," inwardly changed by the mighty power of God, from " an earthly, sensual, devilish mind, to the mind which was in Christ Jesus. He will experience what St. Paul means, by those remarkable words to the Galatians, " Ye are the sons of God by faith; and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." " He that believeth," as a son, (as St. John observes) " hath the witness in himself. The Spirit it-

self witnesses with his spirit, that he is a child of God. The love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him."

15. But many doubts and fears may still remain, even in a child of God, while he is weak in faith, while he is in the number of those whom St. Paul terms "babes in Christ." But when his faith is strengthened, when he receives Faith's abiding impression, realizing things to come; when he has received the abiding witness of the Spirit, doubts and fears vanish away. He then enjoys the *plerophory*, or "full assurance of faith," excluding all doubt, and all "fear that hath torment." To those whom he styles *young men*, St. John says, "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." These, the Apostle observes in the other verse, had "the word of God abiding in them." It may not improbably mean, The pardoning word, the word which spake all their sins forgiven. In consequence of which, they have the consciousness of the Divine favour, without any intermission.

16. To these more especially we may apply the exhortation of the Apostle Paul, "Leaving the
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the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, (namely, repentance and faith,) let us go on unto perfection." But in what sense are we to *leave those principles*? Not absolutely; for we are to retain both one and the other, the knowledge of ourselves, and the knowledge of God, unto our lives end. But only comparatively; not fixing, as we did at first, our whole attention upon them, thinking and talking perpetually of nothing else, but either repentance or faith. But what is the *Perfection* here spoken of? It is not only a deliverance from doubts and fears, but from sin, from all inward, as well as outward sin: From evil desires, and evil tempers, as well as from evil words and works. Yea, and it is not only a negative blessing, a deliverance from all evil dispositions, implied in that expression, "I will circumcise thy heart;" but a positive one likewise, even the planting all good dispositions in their place, clearly implied in that other expression, "To love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul."

17. These are they to whom the Apostle John gives the venerable title of *Fathers*, who "have known him that is from the beginning," the eternal three one God. One of these expresses himself thus, "I bear about with me, an ex-

perimental verity and a plenitude of the presence of the ever-blessed Trinity." And those who are fathers in Christ, generally (tho' I believe) not always, enjoy the plerophory or "full assurance of hope:" Having no more doubt of reigning with him in glory, than if they already saw him coming in the clouds of heaven. But this does not prevent their continually increasing in the knowledge and love of God. While they "rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks," they pray in particular, that they may never cease to watch, to deny themselves, to take up their crosses daily, to fight the good fight of faith, and against the world, the devil, and their own manifold infirmities; till they are "able to comprehend with all saints, what is the length, and breadth, and height, and depth, and to know that love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; yea, to be filled with all the fulness of God."

Yarm, June 11, 1788.

JEREMIAH

JEREMIAH XXIII. 24.

Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

1. **H**OW strongly and beautifully do these words express the omnipresence of God? And can there be in the whole compass of nature a more sublime subject? Can there be any more worthy the consideration of every rational creature? Is there any more necessary to be considered and to be understood, so far as our poor faculties will admit? How many excellent purposes may it answer? What deep instruction may it convey, to all the children of men. And more directly to the children of God?

2. How is it, then, that so little has been wrote on so sublime and useful a subject? It is true, that some of our most eminent writers have occasionally touched upon it, and have several strong and beautiful reflections, which were naturally suggested by it. But which of them has published a regular treatise, or so much as a sermon upon the head? Perhaps many were conscious of their inability to do justice to so vast a subject. It is possible, there may some such lie hid, in the voluminous writings of the

last century. But if they are hid even in their own country, if they are already buried in oblivion, it is the same, for any use they are of, as if they had never been wrote.

3. What seems to be wanting still, for general use, is a plain discourse on the Omnipresence, or Ubiquity of God; first, in some manner explaining and proving that glorious truth, God is in this, and every place; and then applying it to the conscience of all thinking men, in a few practical inferences.

I. 1. Accordingly I will endeavour, by the assistance of his Spirit, first, a little to explain the omnipresence of God: To shew how we are to understand this glorious truth, God is in this, and every place. The Psalmist, you may remember, speaks strongly and beautifully upon it, in the hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm: observing in the most exact order, first, God is in this place, and then God is in every place. He observes, first, "Thou art about my bed, and about my path, and spiest out all my ways," (ver. 2.) "Thou hast fashioned me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me;" (ver. 4.) Altho' the manner thereof he could not explain: *How* it was, he could not tell. "Such knowledge, (says he) is too wonderful for me: I cannot attain unto it," (ver. 5.) He next observes,

ferves, in the most lively and affecting manner, That God is in every place. "Whither shall I go then from thy Spirit, or whither shall I go from thy presence? If I climb up into heaven, thou art there: If I go down to hell, thou art there also;" (ver. 5, 6.) If I could ascend, speaking after the manner of men, to the highest part of the universe, or could I descend to the lowest point, thou art alike present both in one and the other. "If I should take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there thy hand would lead me:" Thy power and thy presence would be before me, "and thy right hand would hold me," seeing thou art equally in the length and breadth, and in the height and depth of the universe. Indeed, thy presence and knowledge not only reach the utmost bounds of the creation, but

Thine omnipresent sight.
Even to the pathless realms extends
Of uncreated night.

In a word, there is no point of space, whether within or without the bounds of creation, where God is not.

2. Indeed this subject is far too vast to be comprehended by the narrow limits of human understanding. We can only say, The great
God,

God, the eternal, the almighty Spirit, is as unbounded in his presence, as in his duration and power. In condescension indeed to our weak understanding, he is said, to “ dwell in heaven :” But strictly speaking, the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, but he is in every part of his dominion. The universal God dwelleth in universal space : So that we may say,

“ Hail, Father ! whose creating call,
Unnumber'd worlds attend !
Jehovah, comprehending all,
Whom none can comprehend !”

3. If we may dare attempt the illustrating this a little farther, what is the space occupied by a grain of sand, compared to that space which is occupied by the starry heavens ? It is as a cypher ; it is nothing : It vanishes away in the comparison. What is it then to the whole expanse of space, to which the whole creation is infinitely less than a grain of sand ? And yet this space to all the whole creation bears no proportion at all, is infinitely less in comparison of the great God than a grain of sand, yea, a millionth part of it, bears to that whole space.

II. 1. This seems to be the plain meaning of those solemn words, which God speaks of himself, “ Do not I fill heaven and earth.”

And

And these sufficiently prove his omnipresence ; which may be farther proved from this consideration, God acts every where, and therefore is every where : For it is an utter impossibility that any being, created or uncreated, should work where it is not. God acts in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, throughout the whole compass of his creation ; by sustaining all things, without which every thing would in an instant sink into its primitive nothing : By governing all, every moment superintending every thing that he has made ; strongly and sweetly influencing all, and yet without destroying the liberty of his rational creatures. The very Heathens acknowledged, that the great God governs the large and conspicuous parts of the universe ; that he regulates the motions of the heavenly bodies, of the sun, moon, and stars : That he is

Vastum

Mens agitans molem, & toto se corpore miscens :

The all-informing soul,

That fills, pervades, and actuates the whole !

But they had no conception of his having a regard to the least things as well as the greatest : Of his presiding over all that he has made, and governing atoms as well as worlds. This we could not have known, unless it had pleased

God

God to-reveal it unto us himself. Had he not himself told us so, we should not have dared to think that “not a sparrow falleth to the ground without the will of our Father which is in heaven:” And much less affirm, that “even the very hairs of our head are all numbered!”

2. This comfortable truth, that God “ filleth heaven and earth,” we learn also from the Psalmist above recited. “ If I climb up into heaven, thou art there; if I go down to hell, thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there thy hand shall lead me.” The plain meaning is, If I remove to any distance whatever, thou art there, thou still besettest me, and layest thine hand upon me. Let me flee to any conceivable or inconceivable distance, above, beneath, or on any side, it makes no difference; thou art still equally there: In thee I still “ live, and move, and have my being.”

3. And where no creature is, still God is there. The presence or absence of any or all creatures, makes no difference with regard to him. He is equally in all, or without all. Many have been the disputes among philosophers, Whether there be any such thing as empty space in the universe? And it is now generally supposed,

supposed, that all space is full. Perhaps it cannot be proved that all space is filled with matter. But the Heathen himself will bear us witness, *Jovis omnia plena*, "All things are full of God." Yea, and whatever space exists beyond the bounds of creation, (for creation must have bounds, seeing nothing is boundless, nothing can be, but the great Creator,) even that space cannot exclude him who fills the heaven and the earth.

4. Just equivalent to this is the expression of the Apostle, Eph. ii. 23, (not as some have strangely supposed, concerning the church, but concerning the Head of it;) "The fulness of him that filleth all in all:" *τα πάντα ἐν πασιν*, literally translated, "all things in all things;" the strongest expression of universality which can possibly be conceived. It necessarily includes the last and the greatest of all things that exist. So that if any expression could be stronger, it would be stronger than even that, the "filling heaven and earth."

5. Indeed this very expression, "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" (the question being equal to the strongest affirmation,) implies the clearest assertion of God's being present every where, and filling all space. For it is well known the Hebrew phrase, *Heaven and Earth*, includes the whole

whole universe, the whole extent of space, created or uncreated, and all that is therein.

6. Nay, and we cannot believe the omnipotence of God, unless we believe his omnipresence. For seeing (as was observed before) nothing can act where it is not; if there were any space where God was not present, he would not be able to do any thing there. Therefore to deny the omnipresence of God, implies likewise the denial of his omnipotence. To set bounds to the one, is undoubtedly to set bounds to the other also.

7. Indeed wherever we suppose him not to be, there we suppose all his attributes to be in vain. He cannot exercise there either his justice or mercy, either his power or wisdom. In that extramundane space, (so to speak) where we suppose God not to be present, we must of course suppose him to have no duration; but as it is supposed to be beyond the bounds of the creation, so it is beyond the bounds of the Creator's power. Such is the blasphemous absurdity, which is implied in this supposition.

8. But to all that is or can be said, of the omnipresence of God, the world has one grand objection: They cannot see him. And this is really at the root of all their other objections. This our blessed Lord observed long ago:

“ Whom

“ Whom the world cannot receive, because they see him not.” But is it not easy to reply, “ Can you see the wind? You cannot. But do you therefore deny its existence or its presence?” You say, No; for I can perceive it by my other senses. “ But by which of your senses do you perceive your soul? Surely you do not deny either the existence or the presence of this! And yet it is not the object of your sight, or of any of your other senses. Suffice it then to consider, That God is a spirit, as is your soul also. Consequently “ him no man hath seen or can see,” with eyes of flesh and blood.

III. 1. But allowing that God is here, as in every place, that he is “ about our bed, and about our path,” that he “ besets us behind and before, and lays his hand upon us:” what inference should we draw from hence? What use should we make of this awful consideration? Is it not meet and right, to humble ourselves before the eyes of his majesty? Should we not labour, continually to acknowledge his presence, “ with reverence and godly fear?” Not indeed with the fear of devils, that believe and tremble, but with the fear of angels, with something similar to that which is felt by the inhabitants of heaven, when

“ Dark with excessive bright his skirts appear,
 Yet dazzles heaven, that brightest seraphim
 Approach not, but with both wings veil their
 eyes.”

2. Secondly. If you believe, that God is about your bed and about your path, and spieth out all your ways, then take care not to do the least thing, not to speak the least word, not to indulge the least thought, which you have reason to think would offend him. Suppose that a messenger of God, an angel, to be now standing at your right hand, and fixing his eyes upon you, would you not take care to abstain from every word or action, that you knew would offend him? Yea, suppose one of your mortal fellow-servants, suppose only a holy man stood by you, would not you be extremely cautious, how you conducted yourself, both in word and action? How much more cautious ought you to be, when you know, that not only a holy man, not an angel of God, but God himself, the Holy One “ that inhabiteth eternity,” is inspecting your heart, your tongue, your hand, every moment? and that he himself will surely bring you into judgment, for all you think, and speak, and act under the sun!

3. In particular. If there is not a word in your tongue, not a syllable you speak, but he
 “ knoweth

“knoweth it altogether;” how exact should you be in “ setting a watch before your mouth, and in keeping the door of your lips ?” How wary does it behove you to be in all your conversation, being forewarned by your Judge, that “ By your words you shall be justified, or by your words you shall be condemned ?” How cautious, lest “ any corrupt communication,” any uncharitable, yea, or unprofitable discourse, should “ proceed out of your mouth :” instead of “ that which is good to the use of edifying,” and meet to “ minister grace to the hearers !”

4. Yea, if God sees our hearts, as well as our hands, and in all places, if he understandeth our thoughts long before they are clothed with words ; how earnestly should we urge that petition, “ Search me, O Lord, and prove me ; try out my reins and my heart : Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting !” Yea, how needful is it, to work together with him, in “ keeping our hearts with all diligence,” till he hath “ cast down imaginations, evil reasonings, and every thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and brought into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

5. On the other hand, if you are already listed under the great Captain of your Salvation,

seeing you are continually under the eye of your Captain, how zealous and active should you be, "to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life? to endure hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ," to use all diligence, to "war a good warfare," and to do whatever is acceptable in his sight? How studious should you be to approve all your ways to his all-seeing eyes, that he may say to your hearts, what he will proclaim aloud in the great assembly of men and angels, "Well done, good and faithful servants."

6. In order to attain these glorious ends, spare no pains to preserve always, a deep, a continual, a lively and a joyful sense of his gracious presence. Never forget his comprehensive word to the great Father of the faithful, "I am the Almighty (rather, the All-sufficient) God, walk before me, and be thou perfect!" Cheerfully expect, that he before whom you stand, will ever guide you with his eye, will support you by his guardian hand, will keep you from all evil. And "when you have suffered a while, will make you perfect, will stablish, strengthen, and settle you:" And then preserve you "unblameable, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Portsmouth, August 12, 1788.

LUKE

LUKE XVI. 31.

If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

1. **H**OW strange a paradox is this! How contrary to the common apprehension of men! Who is so confirmed in unbelief, as not to think, “If one came to me from the dead, I should be effectually persuaded to repent?” But this passage affords us a more strange saying, ver. 14; “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.” “No! Why not? Why cannot we serve both?” will a true servant of Mammon say. Accordingly the Pharisees who supposed they served God, and did cordially serve Mammon, “derided him:” ἐξευνέτησαν; a word expressive of the deepest contempt. But he said, ver. 15, “Ye are they who justify yourselves before men: But God knoweth your hearts: And that which is highly esteemed among men, is (very commonly) an abomination before God:” A terrible proof of which our Lord subjoins in the remaining part of the chapter.

2. But is the subsequent account merely a parable, or a real history? It has been believed by many, and roundly asserted, to be a mere parable; because of one or two circumstances therein, which are not easy to be accounted for. In particular, it is hard to conceive, how a person in Hell, could hold conversation with one in Paradise. But admitting we cannot account for this, will it overbalance an express assertion of our Lord? There was, says our Lord, "a certain rich man,"—Was there not? Did such a man never exist? "And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus,"—Was there, or was there not? Is it not bold enough positively to deny, what our blessed Lord positively affirms? Therefore we cannot reasonably doubt, but the whole narration, with all its circumstances, is exactly true. And Theophylact, (one of the ancient commentators on the Scriptures,) observes upon the text, "That according to the tradition of the Jews, Lazarus lived at Jerusalem."

I purpose, with God's assistance, first to explain this history: Secondly, to apply it: And thirdly, to prove the truth of that weighty sentence with which it is concluded; namely, "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

I. 1. And,

I. 1. And, first, I will endeavour, with God's assistance, to explain this history. "There was a certain rich man." And doubtless on that very account, highly esteemed among men, "who was clothed in purple and fine linen." And consequently esteemed the more highly, both as appearing suitably to his fortune, and as an encourager of trade: "And fared sumptuously every day." Here was another reason for his being highly esteemed, his hospitality and generosity, both by those who frequently sat at his table, and the tradesmen that furnished it.

2. "And there was a certain beggar," one in the lowest line of human infamy, named Lazarus, according to the Greek termination; in Hebrew, Eleazer. From his name we may gather that he was of no mean family, although this branch of it was at present so reduced. It is probable, he was well known in the city; and it was no scandal to him to be named. "Who was laid at his gate,"—although no pleasing spectacle, so that one might wonder he was suffered to lie there; "full of sores;" of running ulcers: "And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table." So the complicated affliction of poverty, pain, and want of bread, lay upon him at once! But it does not appear that any creature took the least

least notice of the despicable wretch! Only
 “ the dogs came and licked his sores.” All the
 comfort which this world afforded him!

3. But see the change! “ The beggar died.”
 Here ended poverty and pain: “ And was carried by angels;”—nobler servants, than any that attended the rich man:—“ Into Abraham’s bosom:” So the Jews commonly termed what our blessed Lord stiles Paradise: The place “ where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest:” The receptacle of holy souls, from death to the resurrection. It is indeed very generally supposed, that the souls of good men, as soon as they are discharged from the body, go directly to heaven: But this opinion has not the least foundation in the Oracles of God: On the contrary, our Lord says to Mary, after the resurrection, “ Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father,” in heaven. But he had been in Paradise, according to his promise to the penitent thief; “ This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” Hence it is plain, that Paradise is not Heaven. It is indeed, (if we may be allowed the expression,) the anti-chamber of Heaven, where the souls of the righteous remain, till after the General Judgment they are received into glory.

4. But

4. But see the scene change again! "The rich man also died:"—What, must rich men also die! Must they fall, "like one of the people?" Is there no help? A rich man in London, some years ago, when the Physician told him, "He must die," gnashed his teeth, and clenched his fist; and cried out vehemently, "God, God, I won't die!" But he died with the very words in his mouth! "And was buried,"—doubtless with pomp enough, suitably to his quality: Although we do not find that there was then in all the world, that exquisite instance of human folly, that senseless cruel mockery of a poor putrifying carcase, what we term *lying in state*.

5. "And in hell he lifted up his eyes." O what a change! How is the mighty fallen! But the word which is here rendered *Hell*, does not always mean, the place of the damned. It is literally, *The invisible world*, and is of very wide extent, including the receptacle of separate spirits, whether good or bad. But here it evidently means, that region of *Hades*, where the souls of wicked men reside, as appears from the following words, "being in torment"—In order, say some, "to atone for the sins committed while in the body, as well as to purify the soul from all its inherent sin." Just so the
 eminent

eminent Heathen Poet, near two thousand years ago:—

“ Necessè est

Multa diu concreta modis inolescere miris,
Ergo exercentur pænis —

Aliæ panduntur inanes

Suspensæ ad ventos : aliis sub gurgite vasto
Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni.”

See the near resemblance between the ancient and the modern Purgatory? Only in the ancient, the Heathen Purgatory, both fire, water, and air were employed in expiating sin, and purifying the soul: Whereas in the mystic Purgatory, fire alone is supposed sufficient, both to purge and expiate! Vain hope! No suffering, but that of Christ, has any power to expiate sin: And no fire, but that of love, can purify the soul, either in time or in eternity.

6. “ He seeth Abraham afar off.”—Far indeed! As far as from Hell to Paradise. Perhaps “ tenfold the length of this terrene.” But how could this be? I cannot tell: But it is by no means incredible. For who knows, how “ far an angel keens?” Or a spirit divested of flesh and blood? “ And Lazarus in his bosom.” It is well known, that in the ancient feasts, among the Jews as well as the Romans, the guests did not *sit down* at the table, as it is now
the

the custom to do, but lay on couches, each having a pillow at his left side, on which he supported his elbow. And he that sat next him, on the right side, was said “ to lie in his bosom.” It was in this sense that the Apostle John lay in his Master’s bosom. Accordingly the expression of Lazarus lying in Abraham’s bosom, implies, that he was in the highest place of honour and happiness.

7. “ And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me.”—Thou fool, what can Abraham do? What can any creature, yea all the creation do, to break the bars of the bottomless pit? Whoever would escape from the place of torment, let him cry to God, the Father of mercy! Nay, but the time is past! Justice now takes place, and rejoices over mercy!—“ And send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame!” How exceeding modest a request is this! He does not say, “ That he may take me out of this flame.” He does not ask, “ That he may bring me a cup of water, or as much as he might hold in the palm of his hand.” But barely, “ That he may dip, were it but the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue.”

No!

No! It cannot be! No mercy can enter within the shades of Hell!

8. "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: But now he is comforted and thou art tormented." Perhaps these words may supply us with an answer to an important question: How came this *rich man* to be in Hell? It does not appear that he was a wicked man, in the common sense of the word: That he was a drunkard, a common swearer, a sabbath-breaker, or that he lived in any known sin. It is probable he was a Pharisee, and as such, was in all the outward parts of religion blameless. How then did he come into the "place of torment?" If there was no other reason to be assigned, there is a sufficient one implied in those words, (He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!) "Thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things,"—the things, which thou hadst chosen for thy happiness. Thou hadst set thy affection on things beneath. And thou hadst thy reward. Thou didst receive the portion which thou hadst chosen, and canst have no portion above. "And likewise Lazarus evil things."—Not *his* evil things; for he did not chuse them. But they were chosen for him, by
the

the wise providence of God: And now "he is comforted, while thou art tormented."

9. "But beside all this, there is a great gulph fixt,"—a great chasm, a vast vacuity. Can any tell us, what this is? What is the nature, what are the bounds of it? Nay, none of the children of men: none but an inhabitant of the invifible world. "So that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Undoubtedly a disembodied spirit could pass thro' any space whatever. But the will of God, determining that none should go across that gulph, is a bound which no creature can pass.

10. "Then he said, I pray thee, therefore, Father, that thou wouldst send him to my Father's house: For I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment," ver. 27, 28. Two entirely different motives have been assigned for this extraordinary request. Some ascribe it wholly to self-love, to a fear of the bitter reproaches, which he might easily suppose, his brethren would pour upon him, if in consequence of his example, and perhaps advice, they came to the same place of torment. Others have imputed it to a nobler motive. They suppose, as the misery of the wicked will not be complet

till the day of judgment, so neither will their wickedness. Consequently they believe, that till that time they may retain some sparks of natural affection. And they not improperly imagine, that this may have occasioned his desire to prevent their sharing his own torment.

II. " Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them," ver. 29. " And he said, Nay, father Abraham; but if one went to them from the dead, they will repent." Who would not be of the same opinion? Might not any one reasonably suppose, that a message solemnly delivered by one that came from the dead, must have an irresistible force? Who would not think, I myself could not possibly withstand such a preacher of repentance?

II. This, I conceive to be the meaning of the words. I will now endeavour, with the help of God, to apply them. And I beseech you, brethren, while I am doing this, " to suffer the word of exhortation." The more closely these things are applied to your souls, the more ye may profit thereby.

I. " There was a certain rich man." And it is no more sinful, to be rich, than to be poor. But it is dangerous beyond expression. Therefore I remind all of you that are of this number,
that

that have the conveniencies of life, and something over, that ye walk upon slippery ground. Ye continually tread on snares and deaths. Ye are every moment on the verge of hell. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for you to enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Who was clothed in purple and fine linen." And some may have a plea for this: Our Lord mentions them that "dwell in King's houses," as wearing *gorgeous*, that is, splendid apparel, and does not blame them for it. But certainly this is no plea, for any that do not dwell in King's houses. Let all of them therefore beware how they follow his example, who is "lifting up his eyes in hell:" Let us follow the advice of the Apostle, being adorned "with good works, and with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit."

2. He "fared sumptuously every day."—Reconcile this with religion who can. I know how plausibly the prophets of smooth things can talk, in favour of Hospitality, of making our friends welcome, of keeping an handsome table, to do honour to religion, of promoting trade, and the like. But God is not mocked: He will not be put off with such pretences as these. Whoever thou art that sharest in the sin of this rich man, were it no other than "faring sumptuously

uously every day," thou shalt as surely be a sharer in his punishment, except thou repent, as if thou wert already crying for a drop of water to cool thy tongue.

3. " And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, who was laid at his gate, full of sores. And desiring to be fed with the crumbs, which fell from the rich man's table," ver. 20, 21. But it seems, both the rich man and his guests were too *religious* to relieve *common* beggars. A sin of which pious Mr. H. earnestly warns his readers; and an admonition of the same kind, I have read on the gate of the good City of Winchester! I wish the gentlemen who placed it there had seen a little circumstance which occurred some years since. At Epworth, in Lincolnshire, the town where I was born, a beggar came to a house in the Market-place, and begged a morsel of bread, saying, " She was very hungry." The master bid her begone, for a lazy jade. She called at a second, and begged a little small beer, saying, " She was very thirsty." She had much the same answer. At a third door, she begged a little water, saying, " She was very faint." But this man also was too conscientious to encourage *common* beggars. The boys seeing a ragged creature turned from door to door, began to pelt her with snow-balls.

She

She looked up, lay down and died! Would you wish to be the man, who refused that poor wretch a morsel of bread, or a cup of water? "Moreover the dogs came, and licked his sores;" being more compassionate than their Master. "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried of angels into Abraham's bosom." Hear this, all ye that are poor in this world. Ye that many times have not food to eat, or raiment to put on: Ye that have not a place where to lay your head, unless it be a cold garret, or a foul and damp cellar! Ye are now reduced to "Solicit the cold hand of charity." Yet lift up your load; it shall not always be thus. I love you, I pity you, I admire you, when "in patience ye possess your souls." Yet I cannot help you. But there is one that can, the Father of the fatherless, and the husband of the widow. "The poor crieth unto the Lord, and he heareth him, and delivereth him out of all his troubles." Yet a little while, if ye truly turn to Him, his angels shall carry you into Abraham's bosom. There ye shall "hunger no more, and thirst no more:" Ye shall feel no more sorrow or pain; but "the Lamb shall wipe away all tears from your eyes, and lead you forth beside fountains of living waters."

4. But see, the scene is changed. "The rich man also died." What? In spite of his riches! Probably sooner than he desired. For how just is that word, "O death, how bitter art thou to a man that is at rest in the midst of his possessions?" However, if that would be a comfort, "he was buried." But how little did it signify whether he was laid under a lofty monument, or among

"Graves with bending osters crown'd,
Where numbers heav'd the crumbled ground."

And what followed? "In hell he lifted up his eyes." This, it is certain, *Ye* need not do. God does not require it of you; he "willeth not that any should perish." Ye cannot, unless by your own wilful choice, intruding into those regions of woe, which God did not prepare for *you*, but for the "devil and his angels."

5. See the scene change again! "He seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." And he knew him: Although perhaps he had only cast a glance at him, while he "lay at his gates." Is any of you in doubt, whether we shall know one another in the other world? Here your doubts may receive a full solution. If a soul in hell knew Lazarus in Paradise, as far off as he was, certainly, those that are together

gether in Paradise, will perfectly know each other.

6. "And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy upon me!" I do not remember in all the Bible, any prayer made to a saint, but this. And if we observe who made it, a man in hell, and with what success, we shall hardly wish to follow the precedent. O let us cry for mercy to God, not to man! And it is our wisdom to cry now! while we are in the land of mercy; otherwise it will be too late! "I am tormented in this flame."—*Tormented*, observe! not purified. Vain hope, that fire can purify a spirit! As well might you expect water to cleanse the soul as fire. God forbid, that you or I should make the trial!

7. And "Abraham said, Son, remember:"—Mark how Abraham accosts a damned spirit? And shall we behave with less tenderness to any of the children of God, "because they are not of our opinion!" "Thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things." O beware it be not *your* case! Are not the things of the world *thy good things*? The chief object of thy desire and pursuit? Are they not thy chief joy? If so, thou art in a very dangerous state, in the very condition which Dives was in upon earth! Do not then dream, that all is well, because
thou

thou art “ highly esteemed among men ! ” Be-
cause thou doest no harm ; or doest much good ?
or attendest all the ordinances of God ? What
is all this, if thy soul cleaves to the dust ? If
thy heart is in the world : If thou lovest the
creature more than the Creator.

8. How striking are the next words ! “ Beside
all this, between us and you there is a great
gulph fixt, so that they who would pass from us
to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that
would come from thence.” This was the text
which occasioned the Epitaph on a right honour-
able infidel and gamester.

“ Here lies a Dicer ; long in doubt
If death could kill the soul, or not ?
Here ends his doubtfulness : At last
Convinc’d—But ah ! the die is cast ! ”

But blessed be God, *your* die is not cast yet.
You are not passed the great gulph, but have it
still in your power, to chuse whether you will
be attended by angels or fiends, when your soul
quits its earthly mansion. Now stretch out
your hand to eternal Life or eternal Death !
And God says, “ Be it unto thee, even as thou
wilt ! ”

9. Being repulsed in this, he makes another
request : “ I pray thee, send him to my father’s
house ; for I have five brethren, that he may
testify

testify to them." It is not impossible that other unhappy spirits may wish well to the relations they have left behind them. But this is the accepted time, for them as well as for us. Let us then address them ourselves: And let us beg our living friends to give us all the help they can, without waiting for assistance from the inhabitants of another world. Let us earnestly exhort them to use the helps they have; to "hear Moses and the Prophets." We are indeed apt to think, like that unhappy spirit, "If one went to them from the dead, they will repent." But Abraham said, "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded tho' one rose from the dead."

III. 1. I am, in the third place, to prove the truth of this weighty sentence, which I will do first briefly, and then more at large.

And first, to express the matter briefly. It is certain, that no human spirit, while it is in the body, can *persuade* another to *repent*; can work in him an entire change both of heart and life: A change from universal wickedness to universal holiness. And suppose that spirit discharged from the body, it is no more able to do this than it was before: No power less than that which created it at first, can create any soul anew.

anew. No angel, much less any human spirit, whether in the body or out of the body, can bring one soul from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God. It might very possibly fright him to death, or to the belief of any speculative truth. But it could not fright him into spiritual life. God alone can raise those that "are dead in trespasses and sins."

2. In order to prove more at large, that if men "hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be *effectually* persuaded to repent, tho' one rose from the dead." I will propose a use of this kind, with all the advantages that can be conceived. Suppose then one that does not "hear Moses and the Prophets," that does not believe the Scripture to be of God, to be fast asleep in his bed, and suddenly to awake, while the clock was just striking one. He is surprized to observe the chamber as light, as if it were noon-day. He looks up, and sees one whom he perfectly knew, standing at his bed side. Tho' a little surprized at first, he quickly recollects himself, and has the courage to ask, "Are not you my friend, who died at such a time?" He answers, I am. I am come from God, with a message to *you*. You have often wished, you could see one risen from the dead, and said, Then you *would* repent. You have
your

your wish : And I am ordered to inform you, you are seeking death in the error of your life. If you die in the state you are in now, you will die eternally. I warn you in his name, That the Scriptures are the real word of God. That from the moment you die, you will be remarkably happy, or unspeakably miserable. That you cannot be happy hereafter, unless you are holy here, which cannot be, unless you are born again. Receive this call from God ! Eternity is at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel ! Having spoken these words, he vanishes away, and the room is dark as it was before.

3. One may easily believe it would be impossible for him not to be convinced for the present. He would sleep no more that night, and would as soon as possible, tell his family what he had seen and heard. Not content with this, he would be impatient to tell it to his former companions. And probably, observing the earnestness with which he spoke, they would not then contradict him. They would say to each other, " Give him time to cool ; then he will be a reasonable man again."

4. Now it is constantly found, that impressions made on the memory gradually decay : That they grow weaker and weaker in process of time, and the traces of them fainter and fainter.

So

So it must be in this case; which his companions observing, would not fail to seize the opportunity. They would speak to this effect: "It was a strange account you gave us some time since: The more so, because we know *you* to be a sensible man, and not inclined to enthusiasm. But perhaps you have not fully considered, how difficult it is in some cases, to distinguish our dreams from our waking thoughts. Has any one yet been able to find out an infallible criterion between them? Is it not then possible that you may have been asleep, when this lively impression was made on your mind?" When he had been brought to think, *possibly* it might be a dream, they would soon persuade him, *probably* it was so: And not long after, to believe, it *certainly* was a dream. So little would it avail, that one came from the dead!

5. It could not be expected to be otherwise. For what was the effect which was wrought upon him? 1. He was exceedingly frightened: 2. This fright made way for a deeper conviction of the truth then declared. But 3. His heart was not changed. None but the Almighty could effect this. Therefore, 4. The bias of his soul was still set the wrong way: He still loved the world, and consequently wished that the Scripture was not true. How easily then,

as

as the fright wore off, would he again believe what he wished? The conclusion then is plain and undeniable. If men "hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded to repent and believe the gospel, tho' one rose from the dead."

6. We may add one consideration more, which brings the matter to a full issue. Before, or about the same time, that Lazarus was carried into Abraham's bosom, another Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, was actually raised from the dead. But were even those who believed the fact, persuaded to repent? So far from it, that "they took counsel, to kill Lazarus," as well as his Master! Away then with the fond imagination, that those who "hear not Moses and the Prophets, would be persuaded, tho' one rose from the dead."

7. From the whole we may draw this general conclusion, That standing Revelation is the best means of rational conviction: Far preferable to any of those extraordinary means which some imagine would be more effectual. It is therefore our wisdom, to avail ourselves of this; to make full use of it, so that it may be a lantern to our feet, and a light in all our paths. Let us take care, that our whole heart and life be conformable thereto; that it be the constant

rule of all our tempers, all our words, and all our actions. So shall we preserve in all things the testimony of a good conscience toward God: And when our course is finished, we too shall be "carried by angels into Abraham's bosom."

Birmingham, March 25, 1788.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WALKING BY
SIGHT, AND WALKING BY FAITH:

A SERMON on 2 CORINTHIANS V. 7.

We walk by Faith, not by Sight.

1. **H**OW short is the description of real Christians! And yet how exceeding full! It comprehends, it sums up the whole experience of those that are truly such, from the time they are born of God, till they remove into Abraham's bosom. For, who are the *we* that are here spoken of? All that are true Christian believers. I say, *Christian*, not *Jewish* believers. All that are not only *servants*, but *children* of God. All that have "the Spirit of adoption, crying in their hearts, *Abba, Father.*" All that have "the Spirit of God witnessing with their spirits, that they are the sons of God."

2. All these, and these alone can say, "We walk by faith, and not by sight." But before we can possibly "walk by faith," we must *live* by faith, and not by sight. And to all real Christians our Lord saith, "Because I live, ye live also: Ye live a life," which the world,

whether learned or unlearned, "know not of."
 "You that," like the world, "were dead in trespasses and sins, hath he quickened, and made alive;" given you new senses, spiritual senses:
 "Senses exercised to discern *spiritual* good and evil."

3. In order thoroughly to understand this important truth, it may be proper to consider the whole matter. All the children of men that are not born of God, "walk by sight," having no higher principle. By *sight*, that is, by *sense*; a part being put for the whole; the sight for all the senses: The rather, because it is more noble and more extensive than any, or all the rest. There are but few objects which we can discern by the three inferior senses of taste, smell, and feeling: And none of these can take any cognizance of its object, unless it be brought into a direct contact with it. Hearing, it is true, has a larger sphere of action, and gives us some knowledge of things that are distant. But how small is that distance, suppose it were fifty or a hundred miles, compared to that between the earth and the sun? And what is even this, in comparison of the distance of the sun and moon and the fixt stars? Yet the sight continually takes knowledge of objects even at this amazing distance.

4. By

4. By sight, we take knowledge of the visible world, from the surface of the earth, to the region of the fixt stars. But what is the world visible to us, but "a speck of creation," compared to the whole universe? To the invisible world? That part of the creation which we cannot see at all, by reason of its distance? In the place of which, through the imperfection of our senses, we are presented with an universal blank.

5. But beside these innumerable objects, which we cannot see by reason of their distance, have we not sufficient ground to believe; that there are innumerable others of too delicate a nature to be discerned by any of our senses? Do not all men of unprejudiced reason allow, (the small number of Materialists, or Atheists, the same thing, I cannot term *men of reason*;) that there is an invisible world, naturally such, as well as a visible one? But which of our senses is fine enough to take the least knowledge of this? We can no more perceive any part of this, by our sight, than by our feeling. Should we allow with the ancient Poet, that

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep."
Should we allow, that the great Spirit, the
Father of all, filleth both heaven and earth:

Yet is the finest of our senses utterly incapable of perceiving either Him or them.

6. All our external senses are evidently adapted to this external, visible world. They are designed to serve us only while we sojourn here, while we dwell in these houses of clay. They have nothing to do with the invisible world: They are not adapted to it. And they can take no more cognizance of the eternal, than of the invisible world. Altho' we are as fully assured of the existence of this, as of any thing in the present world. We cannot think death puts a period to our being. The body indeed returns to dust: But the soul, being of a nobler nature, is not affected thereby. There is therefore an eternal world, of what kind soever it be. But how shall we attain the knowledge of this? What will teach us to draw aside the veil—"That hangs 'twixt mortal and immortal being?" We all know,—“The vast, the unbounded prospect lies before us:” But are we constrained to add,—“Yet clouds, alas! and darkness rest upon it.”

7. The most excellent of our senses, it is undeniably plain, can give us no assistance herein. And what can our boasted reason do? It is now universally allowed, *Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuit prius in sensu*: Nothing is in
the

the understanding, which was not first perceived by some of the senses. Consequently the understanding having here nothing to work upon, can afford us no help at all. So that in spite of all the information we can gain, either from sense or reason, both the invisible and eternal world are unknown to all that "walk by sight."

8. But is there no help? Must they remain in total darkness, concerning the invisible and the eternal world? We cannot affirm this: Even the Heathens did not all remain in total darkness concerning them. Some few rays of light have in all ages and nations gleamed through the shade. Some light they derived from various fountains, touching the invisible world. "The heavens declared the glory of God," tho' not to their outward sight; "The firmament shewed" to the eyes of their understanding the existence of their Maker. From the creation they inferred, the being of a Creator, powerful and wise, just and merciful. And hence they concluded, there must be an eternal world, a future state to commence after the present, wherein the justice of God in punishing wicked men, and his mercy in rewarding the righteous, will be openly and undeniably displayed, in the sight of all intelligent creatures.

9. We

9. We may likewise reasonably suppose, that some traces of knowledge, both with regard to the invisible and the eternal world, were delivered down from Noah and his children, both to their immediate and remote descendants. And however these were obscured or disguised by the addition of numberless fables, yet something of truth was still mingled with them, and these streaks of light prevented utter darkness. Add to this, that God never, in any age or nation, "left himself quite without a witness" in the hearts of men; but while he "gave them rain and fruitful seasons," imparted some imperfect knowledge of the Giver. "He is the true light that still, in some degree, enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world."

10. But all these lights put together availed no farther, than to produce a faint twilight. It gave them, even the most enlightened of them, no *εὐχολογία*, no demonstration, no demonstrative conviction, either of the invisible, or of the eternal world. Our philosophical Poet justly terms Socrates, "The wisest of all moral men;" that is, of all that were not favoured with divine revelation. Yet what evidence had he of another world, when he addressed those that had condemned him to death,—

"And

“ And now, O ye Judges, ye are going to live, and I am going to die. Which of these is best, God knows; but I suppose, no man does.” Alas! What a confession is this? Is this all the evidence that poor, dying Socrates had, either of an invisible, or an eternal world! And yet even this is preferable to the light of the great and good Emperor, Adrian. Remember, ye modern heathens, and copy after his pathetic address to his parting soul. (For fear I should puzzle you with Latin, I give it you in Prior’s fine translation.)

“ Poor, little, pretty, fluttering thing,
Must we no longer live together?
And dost thou prune thy trembling wing,
To take thy flight, thou know’st not whither.

Thy pleasing vein, thy humorous folly,
Lies all neglected, all forgot!

And pensive, wavering, melancholy,
Thou hop’st and fear’st thou know’st not
what.”

II. “ Thou knowest not what!” True, there was no knowledge of what was to be hoped or feared after death, till “ the Sun of Righteousness” arose, to dispel all their vain conjectures; and “ brought life and immortality,” that is, immortal life, “ to light thro’ the gospel.” Then, (and not till then, unless
in

in some rare instances,) God revealed, unveiled the invisible world. He then revealed himself to the children of men. "The Father revealed the Son" in their hearts: "And the Son revealed the Father. He that of old time commanded light to shine in their hearts, and enlightened them with the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ."

12. It is where sense can be of no farther use, that Faith comes in to our help: It is the grand desideratum: It does what none of the senses can; no, not with all the helps that art hath invented. All our instruments, however improved by the skill and labour of so many succeeding ages, do not enable us to make the least discovery of these unknown regions. They barely serve the occasions for which they were formed, in the present, visible world.

13. How different is the case, how vast the pre-eminence of them that "walk by Faith!" God having "opened the eyes of their understanding," pours divine light into their soul, whereby they are enabled to "see Him that is invisible," to see God, and the things of God. What their "eye had not seen, nor their ear heard, neither had it entered into their heart to conceive," God from time to time reveals to them, by the "unction of the Holy One, which teacheth

teacheth them of all things." Having "entered into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," by that "new and living way," and being joined unto "the general assembly and church of the first-born, and unto God the judge of all, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant," each of these can say, "I live not, but Christ liveth in me; I now live that life, which is hid with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is *my* life shall appear, then *I* shall likewise appear with him in glory."

14. They that *live by faith, walk by faith*. But what is implied in this? They regulate all their judgments concerning good and evil, not with reference to visible and temporal things, but to things invisible and eternal. They think visible things to be of small value, because they pass away like a dream; but on the contrary, they account invisible things to be of high value, because they will never pass away. Whatever is invisible is eternal: The things that are not seen, do not perish. So the Apostle, "The things that are seen are temporal; but the things that are not seen are eternal." Therefore they that "walk by faith," do not desire the "things which are seen;" neither are they the object of their pursuit. They "set their affections on things above, not on things on the earth." They seek

seek only the things which are "where Jesus sitteth at the right hand of God." Because they know "the things that are seen are temporal," passing away like a shadow, therefore they "look not at them," they desire them not, they account them as nothing; but "they look at the things which are not seen, that are eternal," that never pass away. By these they form their judgments of all things. They judge them to be good or evil, as they promote or hinder their welfare, not in time, but in eternity. They weigh whatever occurs, in this balance: What influence has it on my eternal state? They regulate all their tempers and passions, all their desires, joys and fears by this standard. They regulate all their thoughts and designs, all their words and actions, so as to prepare them for that invisible and eternal world, to which they are shortly going. They do not *dwell*, but only *sojourn* here; not looking upon earth as their home, but only "travelling through Immanuel's ground to fairer worlds on high."

15. Brethren, are *you* of this number, who are now here before God? Do *you* see him that "is invisible." Have you Faith? Living Faith? The Faith of a child? Can you say, "The life that I now live, I live by faith in the

the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me?" Do you "walk by Faith?" Observe the question. I do not ask Whether you curse, or swear, or profane the sabbath, or live in any outward sin? I do not ask, Whether you do good, more or less? Or attend all the ordinances of God? But suppose you are blameless in all these respects, I ask in the name of God, By what standard do you judge of the value of things? By the visible or the invisible world? Bring the matter to an issue in a single instance: Which do you judge best, that your son should be a pious cobbler, or a profane lord? Which appears to you most eligible, that your daughter should be a child of God, and walk on foot, or a child of the devil, and ride in a coach and six? When the question is, concerning marrying your daughter, If you consider her body more than her soul? Take knowledge of yourself! You are in the way to hell, and not to heaven; for you walk by sight, and not by faith. I do not ask, whether you live in any outward sin, or neglect,—But do you *seek*, in the general tenor of your life, "the things that are above," or the "things that are below?" Do you "set your affections on things above," or on "things of the earth?" If on the latter, you are as surely in the way of destruction, as

a thief, or a common drunkard. My dear friends, let every man, every woman among you, deal honestly with yourselves. Ask your own heart, What am I seeking day by day? What am I desiring? What am I pursuing? Earth or heaven? The things that are seen, or the things that are not seen? What is your object, God or the world? As the Lord liveth, if the world is your object, still all your religion is vain.

16. See then, my dear brethren, that from this time at least, ye chuse the better part. Let your judgment of all the things round about you be according to the real value of things, with a reference to the invisible and eternal world. See that ye judge every thing fit to be pursued or shunned, according to the influence it will have on your eternal state. See that your affections, your desire, your joy, your hope, be set not on transcient objects, not on things that fly as a shadow, that pass away like a dream; but on those that are incapable of change, that are incorruptible and fade not away: Those that remain the same, when heaven and earth "flee away, and there is no place found for them." See that in all you think, speak or do, the eye of your soul be single, fixt on "him that is invisible, and the glories that shall be revealed."

revealed." Then shall "your whole body be full of light." Your whole soul shall enjoy the light of God's countenance. And you shall continually see "the light of the glorious love of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

17. See in particular that all your "desire be unto him, and unto the remembrance of his name." Beware of "foolish and hurtful desires:" Such as arise from any visible or temporal thing. All these St. John warns us of, under that general term "love of the world." It is not so much to the men of the world, as to the children of God, he gives that important direction, "Love not the world, neither the things of the world." Give no place to the "desire of the flesh:" The gratification of the outward senses, whether of the taste, or any other. Give no place to "the desire of the eye," the internal sense, or imagination, by gratifying it, either by grand things, or beautiful, or uncommon. Give no place to "the pride of life," the desire of wealth, of pomp, or of the honour that cometh of men. St. John confirms this advice, by a consideration parallel to that observation which St. Paul had made to the Corinthians; "For the world and the fashion of it passeth away." "The fashion of it," all worldly objects, business, pleasures,

cares, whatever now attracts our regard, or attention, passeth away—is in the very act of passing, and will return no more. Therefore desire none of these fleeting things; but that glory which “abideth for ever.”

18. Observe well: This is Religion, and this alone: This alone is true Christian Religion: Not this or that opinion, or system of opinions, be they ever so true, ever so scriptural. It is true, this is commonly called Faith. But those who suppose it to be Religion, are given up to a strong delusion, to believe a lie: And if they suppose it to be a sure passport to heaven, are in the high road to hell. Observe well: *Religion* is not *harmlessness*; which a careful observer of mankind properly terms *Hellish harmlessness*, as it sends thousands to the bottomless pit. It is not *Morality*, excellent as that is, when it is built on a right foundation, loving Faith. But when otherwise, it is of no value in the sight of God. It is not *Formality*, the most exact observance of all the ordinances of God. This too, unless it be built on the right foundation, is no more pleasing to God, than “the cutting off a dog’s neck.” No: Religion is no less than living in eternity, and walking in eternity: And hereby walking in the love of God and man, in lowliness, meekness, and resignation.

This,

This, and this alone, is that "life, which is hid with Christ in God." He alone, who experiences this, "dwells in God, and God in him." This alone is setting the crown upon Christ's head, and doing his "will on earth, as it is done in heaven."

19. It will easily be observed, that this is the very thing that men of the world call *Enthusiasm*. A word just fit for their purpose, because no man can tell either the meaning, or even the derivation of it. If it has any determinate sense, it means a species of religious madness. Hence, when you speak your experience, they immediately cry out, "much religion hath made thee mad." And all that you experience either of the invisible or of the eternal world, they suppose to be only the waking dreams of a heated imagination. It cannot be otherwise, when men born blind, take upon them to reason concerning light and colours. They will readily pronounce those to be insane, who affirm the existence of those things, whereof they have no conception.

20. From all that has been said, it may be seen with the utmost clearness, what is the nature of that fashionable thing called *Dissipation*. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear:

It is the very quintessence of Atheism: It is artificial added to natural ungodliness. It is the art of forgetting God, of being altogether "without God in the world:" The art of excluding him, if not out of the world he has created, yet out of the minds of all his intelligent creatures. It is a total studied inattention to the whole invisible and eternal world: More especially to death, the gate of eternity, and to the important consequences of death, heaven and hell.

21. This is the real nature of *Dissipation*. And is it so harmless a thing, as it is usually thought? It is one of the choicest instruments of destroying immortal spirits, that was ever forged in the magazines of hell. It has been the means of plunging myriads of souls, that might have enjoyed the glory of God, into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. It blots out all religion at one stroke, and levels man with the beasts that perish. All ye that fear God, flee from Dissipation! Dread and abhor the very name of it. Labour to have God in all your thoughts! To have Eternity ever in your eye. "Look continually, not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen." Let your hearts be fixed there,

THE UNITY OF THE DIVINE BEING :

A SERMON ON MARK XII. 33.

There is one God.

I. **A**ND as there is one God, so there is one Religion and one Happiness for all men. God never intended there should be any more : And it is not possible there should. Indeed in another sense, as the Apostle observes, “ there are gods many, and lords many.” All the Heathen nations had their gods, and many, whole shoals of them. And generally, the more polished they were, the more gods they heaped up to themselves : But to us, to all that are favoured with the Christian Revelation, “ there is but one God,” who declares of himself, “ Is there any God, beside me ? There is none ; I know not any.”

2. But who can search out this God to perfection ? None of the creatures that he has made. Only some of his attributes he hath been pleased to reveal to us in his word. Hence we learn, That God is an Eternal Being. “ His goings forth are from everlasting,” and will continue to everlasting. As he ever was, so he ever will be ; as there was no beginning of his existence,

existence, so there will be no end. This is universally allowed to be contained in his very name, JEHOVAH: Which the Apostle John accordingly renders, "He that was, and that is, and that is to come." Perhaps it would be as proper to say, "He is from everlasting, to everlasting."

3. Nearly allied to the Eternity of God, is his Omnipresence. As he exists thro' infinite Duration, so he cannot but exist thro' infinite Space: According to his own question, equivalent to the strongest assertion, "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." (Heaven and earth, in the Hebrew idiom, implying the whole universe.) Which therefore, according to his own declaration, is filled with his presence.

4. This One, Eternal, Omnipresent Being, is likewise All-perfect. He has from Eternity to Eternity, all the perfections and infinitely more, than it ever did, or ever can enter into the heart of man to conceive: Yea, infinitely more than the angels in heaven can conceive. These perfections we usually term the attributes of God.

5. And he is Omnipotent, as well as Omnipresent: There can be no more bounds to his Power, than to his presence. He "hath a mighty

mighty arm: Strong is his hand, and high is his right hand." He doth whatsoever pleaseth him, in the heavens, the earth, the sea, and in all deep places. With men, we know, many things are impossible: "But not with God; with him all things are possible." Whensoever he willeth, to do is present with him.

6. The Omniscience of God is a clear and necessary consequence of his Omnipresence. If he is present in every part of the Universe, he cannot but know whatever is, or is done there: According to the word of St. James, "Known unto God are all his works," and the works of every creature, "from the beginning" of the world: Or rather, as the phrase literally implies, "from eternity." His eyes are not only "over all the earth, beholding the evil and the good;" but likewise over the whole creation, yea, and the paths of uncreated night. Is there any difference between his knowledge and his wisdom? If there be, is not his knowledge the more general term (at least according to our weak conceptions,) and his wisdom a particular branch of it? Namely, the knowing the end of every thing that exists, and the means of applying it to that end?

7. Holiness is another of the attributes of the almighty, all-wise God. He is infinitely distant from

from every touch of evil. He "is light, and in him is no darkness at all." He is a God of unblemished justice and truth: But above all is his mercy. This we may easily learn from that beautiful passage, in the thirty-fourth and fifth chapters of Exodus. "And Moses said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And the Lord descended in the cloud, and proclaimed the name of the LORD, the LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, and forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin."

8. This God is a Spirit; not having such a body, such parts, or passions, as men have. It was the opinion both of the ancient Jews and the ancient Christians, that He alone is a pure spirit, totally separate from all matter: whereas they supposed all other spirits, even the highest angels, even Cherubim and Seraphim, to dwell in material vehicles, tho' of an exceeding light and subtle substance. At that point of duration, which the infinite wisdom of God saw to be most proper, for reasons which lie hid in the abyss of his own understanding, not to be fathomed by any finite mind, God "called into being all that is," created the heavens and the earth, together with all that they contain. "All things

things were created by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." He created man in particular, after his own image, to be "a picture of his own eternity." When he had raised man from the dust of the earth, he breathed into him an immortal spirit. Hence he is peculiarly called "the Father of our spirits;" yea, "the Father of the spirits of all flesh."

9. He "made all things," as the wise man observes, "for himself, for his glory they were created." Not "as if he needed any thing:" seeing "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." He made all things to be happy: He made man to be happy in himself. He is the proper center of spirits, for whom every created spirit was made. So true is that well known saying of the ancient Fathers, *Fecisti nos ad te: Et irrequietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te.* Thou hast made us for thyself: And our heart cannot rest, till it resteth in Thee.

10. This observation gives us a clear answer to that question in the Assembly's Catechism, "For what end did God create man?" The answer is, "To glorify and enjoy him for ever." This is undoubtedly true: But is it quite clear, especially to men of ordinary capacities?

cities? Do the generality of common people understand that expression, "To glorify God?" No, no more than they understand Greek. And it is altogether above the capacity of children, to whom we can scarce ever speak plain enough. Now is not this the very principle that should be inculcated upon every human creature, "You are made to be happy in God," as soon as ever reason dawns? Should not every parent, as soon as a child begins to talk, or to run alone, say something of this kind, "See! what is that which shines so over your head? That we call the Sun? See, how bright it is? Feel how it warms you? It makes the grass to spring and every thing to grow. But God made the Sun. The Sun could not shine, nor warm, nor do any good without Him." In this plain and familiar way a wise parent might many times in a day say something of God; particularly insisting, "He made *you*; and he made you to be happy in him: And nothing else can make you happy." We cannot press this too soon. If you say, "Nay, but they cannot understand you when they are so young:" I answer, No, nor when they are fifty years old, unless God opens their understanding. And can He not do this at any age?

11. Indeed this should be prest on every human creature, young and old, the more earnestly and diligently, because so exceeding few, even of those that are called Christians, seem to know any thing about it. Many indeed think of being happy with God in heaven: But the being happy in God on earth never entered into their thoughts. The less so, because from the time they came into the world, they are surrounded with idols. Such in turns are all "the things that are seen," (whereas God is not seen,) which all promise a happiness independent of God. Indeed it is true, that

"Upright both in heart and will,
We by our God were made:
But we turn'd from good to ill,
And o'er the creatures stray'd:

"Multiplied our wand'ring thought,
Which first was fixt on God alone;
In ten thousand objects sought
The bliss we lost in one."

12. These idols, these rivals of God are innumerable: But they may be nearly reduced to three parts. First, Objects of sense; such as gratify one or more of our outward senses. These excite the first kind of "love of the world," which St. John terms, "the desire of the flesh." Secondly, Objects of the imagination; things that

that gratify our fancy, by grandeur, beauty, or novelty. All these make us fair promises of happiness, and thereby prevent our seeking it in God. This the Apostle terms, "the desire of the eyes:" Whereby chiefly the imagination is gratified. They are, thirdly, what St. John calls, "the pride of life." He seems to mean, honour, wealth, and whatever directly tends to engender pride.

13. But suppose we were guarded against all these, are there not other idols, which we have need to be apprehensive of: And idols therefore the more dangerous, because we suspect no danger from them? For is there any danger to be feared from our friends and relations? From the mutual endearments of husbands and wives, or of parents and children? Ought we not to bear a very tender affection to them? Ought we not to love them only less than God? Yea, and is there not a tender affection due to those, whom God has made profitable to our souls? Are we not commanded, to "esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake? All this is unquestionably true. And this very thing makes the difficulty. Who is sufficient for this, to go far enough herein, and no farther? To love them enough, and not too much? We can love a wife, a child, a friend, well enough, with-

out loving the creature more than the Creator? Who is able to follow the caution which St. Paul gives to the Christians at Thessalonica, 1 Thess. iv. 5.?

14. I wish that weighty passage, (so strangely disguised in our translation) were duly considered. "Let every one of you know how to possess his vessel, (his wife) in sanctification and honour." So as neither to dishonour God or himself; nor to obstruct but further holiness. St. Paul goes on, Μη ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίαις, which we render, "Not in the lust of concupiscence:—(What is this? It gives the English reader no conception at all. Πάθος means any *violent* or *impetuous affection*. *Επιθυμία* is *desire*. By the two words the Apostle undoubtedly means, vehement and impetuous affections,)—"as the Gentiles who know not God:" And so may naturally seek happiness in a creature.

15. If by the grace of God, we have avoided or forsaken all these idols; there is still one more dangerous than all the rest, and that is, Religion. It will easily be conceived, I mean False Religion: That is, any Religion which does not imply, "the giving the heart to God." Such is, first, a Religion of Opinions, or what is commonly called, Orthodoxy. Into this snare fall thousands of those, who profess to hold

hold " Salvation by Faith:" Indeed all of those who by Faith mean only a system of Arminian or Calvinian Opinions. Such is, secondly, a Religion of Forms of barely outward Worship, how constantly soever performed; yea, tho' we attend the Church service every day, and the Lord's Supper every Sunday. Such is, thirdly, a Religion of Works, of seeking the favour of God, by doing good to men. Such is, lastly, a Religion of Atheism; that is, every Religion whereof God is not laid for the foundation. In a word, a Religion wherein " God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," is not the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last point.

16. True Religion is right tempers towards God and man. It is in two words, Gratitude and Benevolence: Gratitude to our Creator and supreme Benefactor, and benevolence to our fellow-creatures. In other words, it is the loving God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves.

17. It is in consequence of our knowing God loves us, that we love him, and love our neighbour as ourselves. Gratitude towards our Creator cannot but produce benevolence to our fellow-creatures. The love of Christ constrains

us, not only to be harmless, to do no ill to our neighbour ; but to be useful, to be “ zealous of good works, as we have time to do good unto all men,” and to be patterns to all, of true genuine morality, of justice, mercy and truth. This is Religion, and this is happiness : the happiness for which we were made. This begins when we begin to know God, by the teaching of his own Spirit. As soon as the Father of Spirits reveals his Son in our hearts, and the Son reveals his Father, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts : Then, and not till then, we are happy. We are happy first, in the consciousness of his favour, which indeed is better than life itself : Next, in the constant communion with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ : Then in all the heavenly tempers, which he hath wrought in us by his Spirit : Again, in the testimony of his Spirit, that all our works please him : And lastly, in the testimony of our own spirit, that “ in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world.” Standing fast in this liberty from sin and sorrow, wherewith Christ hath made them free, real Christians “ rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks.” And their happiness still increases,

creases, as they “ grow up into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

18. But how little is this religion experienced, or even thought of, in the Christian world? On the contrary, what reason have we to take up the lamentation of a dying saint, (Mr. Hali-burton, of St. Andrews, in Scotland,) “ O Sirs, I am afraid a kind of *rational* religion is more and more prevailing amongst us ; a religion that has nothing of Christ belonging to it: Nay, that has not only nothing of Christ, but nothing of God in it !” And indeed how generally does this prevail, not only among professed Infidels, but also among those who call themselves Christians, who profess to believe the Bible to be the word of God ! Thus our own countryman, Mr. Woollaston, in that elaborate work, “ The Religion of Nature delineated,” presents us with a complete system of religion, without any thing of God about it, without being beholden in any degree, to either the Jewish or Christian revelation. Thus Monsieur Burlo-machi (of Geneva) in his curious treatise on “ The Law of Nature,” does not make any more use of the Bible than if he had never seen it. And thus the late Professor Hutcheson, of Glasgow, (a stranger writer than either of the other,) is so far from grounding virtue on either
the

the fear or the love of God, that he quite shuts God out of the question ; not scrupling to declare in exprefs terms, That “ a regard to God is *inconsistent with* virtue : Infomuch that if in doing a beneficent action, you expect God to reward it, the virtue of the action is loft ; It is then not a virtuous, but a selfish action !”

19. Perhaps indeed there are not many who carry the matter to fo great a length. But how great is the number of thofe, who allowing religion to confift of two branches, our duty to God, and our duty to our neighbour, entirely forget the firft part, and put the fecond part for the whole, for the entire duty of man. Thus almoft all men of letters, both in England, France, Germany, yea, and all the civilized countries of Europe, extol *humanity* to the fkyes, as the very effence of religion. To this the great Triumvirate, Rouffeau, Voltaire, and David Hume, have contributed all their labours, fparing no pains to eftablifh a religion, which fhould ftand on its own foundation, independent on any revelation whatever, yea, not fuppoſing even the being of a God. So leaving him, if he has any being, to himſelf, they have found out both a religion and a happinefs, which have no relation at all to God, nor any dependence upon him.

20. It is no wonder that this religion should grow fashionable, and spread far and wide in the world. But call it *humanity, virtue, morality*, or what you please, it is neither better nor worse than Atheism. Men hereby wilfully and designedly put asunder what God has joined, the duties of the first and the second table. It is separating the love of our neighbour from the love of God. It is a plausible way of thrusting God out of the world he has made. They can do the business without him, and so either drop him entirely, not considering him at all: Or suppose that since

“ He gave things their beginning
And set this whirligig a spinning,”

he has not concerned himself with these trifles, but let every thing take its own course.

21. On the contrary, we have the fullest evidence that the Eternal, Omnipresent, Almighty, All-wise Spirit, as he created all things, so he continually superintends whatever he has created. He governs all, not only to the bounds of creation, but through the utmost extent of space: And not only through the short time that is measured by the earth and sun, but from everlasting to everlasting. We know, that as all nature, so all religion, and all happiness, depend

depend on him : And we know that whoever teach to seek happiness without him, are monsters, and the pests of society.

22. But after all the vain attempts of learned or unlearned men, it will be found, as there is but one God, so there is but one happiness, and one religion. And both of these centre in God. Both by scripture and by experience we know, that an unholy and therefore an unhappy man, seeking rest but finding none, is sooner or later convinced, that sin is the ground of his misery, and cries out of the deep to Him that is able to save, " God be merciful to me a sinner." It is not long before he finds " redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins." Then " the Father reveals his Son" in his heart, and he " calls Jesus, Lord, by the Holy Ghost." And then the love of God is " shed abroad in his heart, by the Holy Spirit which is given unto him." From this principle springs real, disinterested benevolence to all mankind, making him humble, meek, gentle to all men, easy to be intreated, to be convinced of what is right, and persuaded to what is good, inviolably patient, with a thankful acquiescence in every step of his adorable Providence. This is Religion, even the whole mind which was also in Christ Jesus. And has any man the insolence

or

or the stupidity to deny, that this is happiness?
Yea, that it

“ Yields more of happiness below,
Than victors in a triumph know ? ”

23. There can be no doubt but from this love to God and man, a suitable conversation will follow. His “ communication,” that is, discourse, will “ be always in grace, seasoned with salt, and meet to minister grace to the hearers.” He will always “ open his mouth with wisdom, and there will be in his tongue the law of kindness.” Hence his affectionate words will “ distil as the dew, and as the rain upon the tender herb.” And men will know, “ it is not he only that speaks, but the Spirit of the Father that speaketh in him.” His actions will spring from the same source with his words, even from the abundance of a loving heart. And while all these aim at the glory of God, and tend to this one point, whatever he does, he may truly say,

“ End of my every action thou,
In all things thee I see !
Accept my hallow'd labour now !
I do it as to thee ! ”

24. He to whom this character belongs, and he alone, is a Christian. To him the one, eternal, omnipresent, all-perfect Spirit, is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. Not
his

his Creator only; but his Sustainer, his Preserver, his Governor: Yea, his Father, his Saviour, Sanctifier and Comforter. This God is his God and his all, in time and in eternity. It is the benevolence springing from this root, which is pure and undefiled religion. But if it be built on any other foundation, as it is of no avail in the sight of God, so it brings no real, solid, permanent happiness to man, but leaves him still a poor, dry, indigent, and dissatisfied creature.

25. Let all therefore that desire to please God, condescend to be taught of God, and take care to walk in that path, which God himself hath appointed. Beware of taking half of this religion for the whole, but take both parts of it together. And see that you begin where God himself begins, "Thou shalt have no other God before me." Is not this the first, our Lord himself being the judge, as well as the great commandment? First, therefore, see that ye love God; next your neighbour, every child of man. From this fountain let every temper, every affection, every passion flow. So shall that "mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Let all your thoughts, words and actions spring from this. So shall you "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world."

Dublin, April 9, 1789.

On

A SERMON ON JEREMIAH VIII. 22.

Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

I. **T**HIS question, as here proposed by the prophet, relates only to a particular people, the Children of *Israel*. But I would here consider it in a general sense, with relation to all mankind. I would seriously inquire, Why has Christianity done so little good in the world? Is it not the balm, the outward means, which the Great Physician has given to men, to restore their spiritual health? Why then is it not restored? You say, Because of the deep and the universal corruption of human nature. Most true. But here is the very difficulty. Was it not intended by our all-wise and almighty Creator, to be the remedy for that corruption? An universal remedy for an universal evil. But it has not answered this intention. It never did. It does not answer it at this day. The disease still remains in its full strength; wickedness of every kind, vice inward and outward in all its forms, still overspread the face of the earth.

2. O Lord God, "righteous art thou! Yet let us plead with thee!" How is this? Hast thou forgotten the world which thou hast made? Which thou hast created for thy own glory? Canst thou despise the work of thy own hands, the purchase of thy Son's blood? Thou hast given medicine to heal our sickness: yet our sickness is not healed. Yet darkness covers the earth, and thick darkness the people. Yea,

"Darkness, such as devils feel,

"Issuing from the pit of hell."

3. What a mystery is this? That Christianity should have done so little good in the world? Can any account of this be given? Can any reasons be assigned for it? Does it not seem that one reason it has done so little good is this, Because it is so little known? Certainly it can do no good, where it is not known. But it is not known at this day to the far greater part of the inhabitants of the earth. In the last century our ingenious and laborious countryman, Mr. *Brerewood*, travelled over great part of the known world, on purpose to enquire, so far as was possible, what proportion the Christians bear to the Heathens and Mahometans. And according to his computation (probably the most accurate which has yet been made,) I suppose mankind

mankind to be divided into thirty parts, nineteen parts of these are still open Heathens, having no more knowledge of Christianity, than the beasts that perish. And we may add to these the numerous nations, which have been discovered in the present century. Add to these such as profess the Mahometan Religion, and utterly scorn Christianity: and five parts out of thirty of mankind are not so much as nominally Christians. So then five parts of mankind out of six, are totally ignorant of Christianity. It is therefore no wonder, that five in six of mankind, perhaps nine in ten, have no advantage from it.

4. But why is it, that so little advantage is derived from it to the Christian world? Are Christians any better than other men, are they better than Mahometans or Heathens? To say the truth, it is well if they are not worse: worse than either Mahometans or Heathens. In many respects they are abundantly worse: but then they are not properly Christians. The generality of these, tho' they bear the Christian name, do not know what Christianity is. They no more understand it than they do *Greek* or *Hebrew*: therefore they can be no better for it. What do the Christians, so-called, of the Eastern Church, dispersed throughout the *Turkish* dominions, know

of genuine Christianity? Those of the *Monea*, of *Giroaffia*, *Mengralia*, *Georgias*? Are they not the very dogs of mankind? And have we reason to think that those of the Southern Church, those inhabiting *Abyssinia*, have any more conception than them, of "worshipping God in spirit and in truth?" Look we nearer home. See the Northern Churches, those that are under the patriarch of *Moscow*. How ex-needing little do they know, either of outward or inward Christianity? How many thousands, yea, myriads of those poor savages, know nothing of Christianity but the name? How little more do they know than the heathen *Tartars* on the one hand, or the heathen *Chinese* on the other?

5. But is not Christianity well known at least to all the inhabitants of the western world? A great part of which is eminently termed *Christendom*, or the land of Christians. Part of these are still members of the Church of *Rome*: part are termed *Protestants*. As to the former, *Portuguese*, *Spaniards*, *Italians*, *French*, *Germans*, what do the bulk of them know of scriptural Christianity? Having had frequent opportunity of conversing with many of these, both at home and abroad, I am bold to affirm, that they are in general totally ignorant, both as to
the

the theory and practice of Christianity : so that they are *perishing* by thousands for lack of knowledge, for want of knowing the very first principles of Christianity.

6. " But surely this cannot be the case of the *Protestants* in *France*, *Switzerland*, *Germany*, and *Holland*? Much less in *Denmark* and *Sweden*?" Indeed I hope it is not altogether. I am persuaded, there are among them many knowing Christians. But I fear we must not think that one in ten, if one in fifty is of this number: certainly not, if we may form a judgment of them, by those we find in *Great Britain* and *Ireland*. Let us see how matters stand at our own door. Do the people of *England* in general, (not the highest or the lowest; for these usually know nothing of the matter: but people of the middle rank,) understand Christianity? Do they conceive what it is? Can they give an intelligible account, either of the speculative or practical part of it? What know they of the very first principles of it? Of the natural and moral attributes of God? Of his particular Providence? Of the redemption of man? Of the offices of Christ? Of the operations of the Holy Ghost? Of justification? Of the new birth? Of inward and outward sanctification?

Speak of any of these things to the first ten persons you are in company with: and will you not find nine out of the ten ignorant of the whole affair? And are not most of the inhabitants of the Scotch Highlands, full as ignorant as these? Yea, and the common people in *Ireland*? (I mean, the Protestants, of whom alone we are now speaking :) Make a fair enquiry, not only in the country cabins, but in the cities of *Cork*, *Waterford*, *Limerick*; Yea, in *Dublin* itself. How few know what Christianity means? How small a number will you find, that have any conception of the analogy of faith? Of the connected chain of scripture truths, and their relation to each other? Namely, The natural corruption of man; justification by faith, the new-birth, inward and outward holiness? It must be acknowledged by all competent judges, who converse freely with their neighbours in these kingdoms, that a vast majority of them know no more of these things, than they do of *Hebrew* or *Arabic*. And what good can Christianity do to these, who are so totally ignorant of it?

7. However, in some parts, both of *England* and *Ireland*, scriptural Christianity is well known: especially in *London*, *Bristol*, *Dublin*,
and

and almost all the large and populous cities and towns of both kingdoms. In these every branch of Christianity is openly and largely declared : and thousands upon thousands continually hear and receive "the truth as it is in Jesus." Why is it then, that even in these parts Christianity has had so little effect ? Why are the generality of the people in all these places Heathens still ? No better than the Heathens of *Africa* or *America*, either in their tempers or in their lives. Now how is this to be accounted for ? I conceive thus. It was a common saying among the Christians in the primitive Church, "The soul and the body made a man : the spirit and discipline make a Christian:" implying that none could be real Christians, without the help of Christian discipline. But if this be so, is it any wonder that we find so few Christians, for where is Christian discipline ? In what part of *England* (to go no farther) is Christian discipline added to Christian doctrine ? Now whatever doctrine is preached, where there is not discipline, it cannot have its full effect upon the hearers.

8. To bring the matter closer still. Is not scriptural Christianity preached, and generally known among the people commonly called *Methodists* ? Impartial persons allow it is. And
have

have they not Christian discipline too, in all the essential branches of it, regularly and constantly exercised? Let those who think any essential part of it is wanting, point it out, and it shall not be wanting long. Why then are not these altogether Christians? Who have both Christian doctrine and Christian discipline? Why is not the spiritual health of the people called *Methodists* recovered? Why is not all that "mind in us, which was also in Christ Jesus?" Why have we not learned of him, our very first lesson, to be meek and lowly of heart? To say with Him, in all circumstances of life, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt! I come not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me?" Why are not we "crucified to the world, and the world crucified to us? Dead to the desires of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life?" Why do not all of us live "the life that is hid with Christ in God?" O why do not we, that have all possible helps, "walk as Christ also walked?" Hath he not left us an example that we might tread in his steps? But do we regard either his example or precept? To instance only in one point. Who regards those solemn words, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth?" Of the three rules which are laid down on this head, in the sermon

sermon on "the mammon of unrighteousness," you may find many that observe the first rule, namely, "Gain all you can." You may find a few that observe the second, "Save all you can:" but how many have you found, that observe the third rule, "Give all you can?" Have you reason to believe, that five hundred of these are to be found among fifty thousand *Methodists*? And yet nothing can be more plain, than that all who observe the two first rules without the third, will be twofold more the children of hell, than ever they were before.

9. O that God would enable me once more, before I go hence and am no more seen, to lift up my voice like a trumpet to those who *gain* and *save* all they can, but do not give all they can. Ye are the men, some of the chief men, who continually grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and in a great measure stop his gracious influence from descending on our assemblies. Many of your brethren, beloved of God, have not food to eat; they have not raiment to put on; they have not a place where to lay their head. And why are they thus distressed? Because *you* impiously, unjustly, and cruelly detain from them, what your Master and theirs lodges in *your* hands, on purpose to supply *their* wants! See that poor member of Christ pinched with hunger, shivering with cold, half naked!

naked! Meantime you have plenty of this world's goods, of meat, drink, and apparel. In the name of God, what are you doing? Do you neither fear God, nor regard man? Why do you not deal your bread to the hungry? And cover the naked with a garment? Have you laid out in your own costly apparel, what would have answered both those intentions? Did God command you so to do? Does he commend you for so doing? Did he intrust you with *his* (not *your*) goods for this end? And does he now say, "Servant of God, well done?" You well know he does not. This idle expence has no approbation, either from God or your own conscience. But, you say, You can *afford* it!" O be ashamed, to take such miserable nonsense into your mouths. Never more utter such stupid cant, such palpable absurdity! Can any steward *afford* to be an errant knave? To waste his Lord's goods? Can any servant *afford* to lay out his Master's money, any otherwise than his Master appoints him? So far from it, that whoever does this, ought to be excluded from a Christian Society.

10. "But is it possible, to supply all the poor in our Society with the necessaries of life?" It *was* possible once to do this, in a larger Society than this. In the first Church at Jerusalem,

saalem, "there was not any among them that lacked, but distribution was made to every one, according as he had need." And we have full proof that it may be so still. It is so among the people called *Quakers*. Yea, and among the *Moravians* so called. And why should it not be so with *us*? "Because they are ten times richer than us." Perhaps fifty times. And yet we are able enough, if we were equally willing to do this.

A gentleman (a Methodist) told me some years since, "I shall leave forty thousand pounds among my children." Now, suppose he had left them but twenty thousand, and given the other twenty thousand to God and the poor; would God have said to him, "Thou fool?" And this would have set all the Society far above want.

11. But I will not talk of giving to God, or leaving half your fortune. You might think this to be too high a price for heaven. I will come to lower terms. Are there not a few among you that could give a hundred pounds, perhaps some that could give a thousand, and yet leave your children as much as would help them to work out *their* own salvation? With two thousand pounds, and not much less, we could supply the present wants of all our poor,
and

and put them in a way of supplying their own wants, for the time to come. Now suppose this could be done, are we clear before God, while it is not done? Is not the neglect of it one cause, why so many are still sick and weak among you? And that both in soul and in body? That they still grieve the Holy Spirit, by preferring the fashions of the world to the commands of God? And, I many times doubt, whether we Preachers are not in some measure partakers of their sin? I am in doubt, whether it is not a kind of partiality. I doubt, whether it is not a great mercy to keep them in our Society? May it not hurt their souls, by encouraging them to persevere, in walking contrary to the Bible? And may it not in some measure intercept the salutary influences of the blessed Spirit, upon the whole Community?

12. I am distressed. I know not what to do. I see what I might have done once. I might have said peremptorily and expressly, "Here I am: I and my Bible. I will not, I dare not vary from this book, either in great things or small. I have no power to dispense with one jot or tittle of what is contained therein. I am determined to be a Bible-Christian, not almost, but altogether. Who will meet me on this ground? Join me on this, or not at all." With regard

regard to dress in particular, I might have been as firm (and I now see it would have been far better) as either the people called *Quakers*, or the *Moravian Brethren*. I might have said, "This is *our* manner of dress, which we know is both scriptural and rational. If you join with us, you are to dress as we do: but you need not join us unless you please." But alas! the time is now past. And what I can do now, I cannot tell.

13. But to return to the main question. Why has Christianity done so little good, even among us? Among the Methodists? Among them that hear and receive the whole Christian Doctrine, and that have Christian Discipline added thereto, in the most essential parts of it? Plainly because we have forgot, or at least, not duly attended to those solemn words of our Lord; "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." It was the remark of a holy man several years ago, "Never was there before a people in the Christian Church, who had so much of the power of God among them, with so little self-denial." Indeed the work of God does go on, and in a surprizing manner, notwithstanding this capital defect; but it cannot go on in the same degree, as it otherwise would: neither can the word of God have its full effect, unless

the hearers of it "deny themselves, and take up their cross daily."

to 14. It would be easy to shew, in how many respects the Methodists in general, are deplorably wanting in the practice of Christian Self-denial: from which indeed they have been continually frightened by the silly outcries of the Antinomians. To instance only in one. While we were at *Oxford*, the rule of every Methodist was, (unless in case of sickness) to *fast* every Wednesday and Friday in the year, in imitation of the Primitive Church, for which they had the highest reverence. Now this practice of the Primitive Church is universally allowed. "Who does not know, says *Epiphanius*, an ancient writer, that the fasts of the fourth and sixth days of the week (Wednesday and Friday) are observed by the Christians throughout the whole world?" So they were by the Methodists for several years; by them all, without any exception. But afterwards some in *London* carried this to excess, and fasted so as to impair their health. It was not long before others made this a pretence for not fasting at all. And I fear there are now thousands of Methodists so called, both in *England* and *Ireland*, who, following the same bad example, have entirely left off fasting: who are so far from fasting twice in the week (as all the stricter Pharisees did,)

did,) that they do not fast twice in the month. Yea, are there not some of you who do not fast one day, from the beginning of the year to the end? But what excuse can there be for this? I do not say for those that call themselves members of the Church of *England*; but for any who profess to believe the scripture to be the word of God? Since, according to this, the man that never fasts, is no more in the way to heaven than the man that never prays.

15. But can any one deny that the members of the Church of *Scotland* fast constantly? Particularly on their sacramental occasions. In some parishes they return only once a year, but in others, suppose in large cities, they occur twice, or even thrice a year. Now it is well known there is always a fast-day in the week preceding the administration of the Lord's Supper. But occasionally looking into a book of accounts in one of their vestries, I observed, "So much set down, *for the dinners* of the Ministers on the fast-day!" And I am informed there is the same article in them all. And is there any doubt, but the people fast just as their Ministers do? But what a farce is this? What a miserable burlesque upon a plain Christian duty! O that the General Assembly would have regard to the honour of their nation! Let them roll away from it this shameful re-

proach, by either enforcing the duty, or removing that article from their books. Let it never appear there any more! Let it vanish away for ever.

16. But why is self-denial in general so little practised at present among the Methodists? Why is so exceeding little of it to be found even in the oldest and largest Societies? The more I observe and consider things, the more clearly it appears, what is the cause of this in *London*, in *Bristol*, in *Birmingham*, in *Manchester*, in *Leeds*, in *Dublin*, in *Cork*. The Methodists grow more and more self-indulgent, because they *grow rich*. Altho' many of them are still deplorably poor, ("Tell it not in Gath, ; publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon!") yet many others, in the space of twenty, thirty, or forty years, are twenty, thirty, yea a hundred times richer than they were when they first entered the Society. And it is an observation which admits of few exceptions, that nine in ten of these, decreased in grace, in the same proportion as they increased in wealth. Indeed, according to the natural tendency of riches, we cannot expect it to be otherwise.

17. But how astonishing a thing is this? How can we understand it? Does it not seem (and yet this cannot be!) that Christianity, true scriptural Christianity, has a tendency, in process

process of time, to undermine and destroy itself? For, wherever true Christianity spreads, it must cause diligence and frugality, which, in the natural course of things, must beget riches. And riches naturally beget pride, love of the world, and every temper that is destructive of Christianity. Now if there be no way to prevent this, Christianity is inconsistent with itself, and of consequence, cannot stand, cannot continue long among any people: since, wherever it generally prevails, it saps its own foundation.

18. But is there no way to prevent this? To continue Christianity among a people? Allowing that diligence and frugality must produce riches, is there no means to hinder riches from destroying the religion of those that possess them? I can see only one possible way: find out another who can. Do you gain all you can, and save all you can? Then you must in the nature of things grow rich. Then if you have any desire to escape the damnation of hell, *give* all you can; otherwise I can have no more hope of your salvation, than for that of *Judas Iscariot*.

19. I call God to record upon my soul, that I advise no more than I practise. I do, blessed be God, gain, and save, and give all I can. And so, I trust in God, I shall do, while the

breath of God is in my nostrils. But what then? I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus, my Lord! Still

I give up every plea beside,

Lord, I am damn'd! but thou hast died!

Dublin, July 2, 1789.

A SERMON ON 2 CORINTHIANS V. 16.

Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, tho' we did know Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

1. **I** Have long desired to see something clearly and intelligibly wrote on these words. This is doubtless a point of no small importance: it enters deep into the nature of Religion: and yet what treatise have we in the *English* language, which is written upon it? Possibly there may be such; but none of them has come to my notice, no, not so much as a single sermon.

2. This is here introduced by the apostle in a very solemn manner. The words literally translated run thus: *He died for all, that they who live—all who live upon the earth, might not henceforth—from the moment they knew him, live unto themselves—seek their own honour, or profit, or pleasure, but unto him—in righteousness and true holiness, ver. 15. So that we from this time—that we know him by faith, know no one, either the rest of the apostles, or you, or any other person, after the flesh.* This uncommon expression, on which the whole doctrine depends, seems to mean, We regard no man,

man, according to his former state, his country, riches, power or wisdom. We consider all men only in their spiritual state, and as they stand related to a better world. "Yea, if we have known even Christ after the flesh,"—which undoubtedly they had done, beholding and loving him as a man, with a natural affection, yet now we know him so no more. We no more know him as a man, by his face, shape, voice, or manner of conversation. We no more think of him as a man, or love him under that character.

3. The meaning then of this strongly figurative expression, appears to be no other than this. From the time that we are created anew in Christ Jesus, we do not think, or speak, or act, with regard to our blessed Lord, as a mere man. We do not now use any expression with relation to Christ, which may not be applied to him not only as he is man, but as he is *God over all, blessed for ever.*

4. Perhaps in order to place this in a clearer light, and at the same time guard against dangerous errors, it may be well to instance in some of those, that in the most plain and palpable manner "know Christ after the flesh." We may rank among the first of these the *Socinians*, those who flatly "deny the Lord that bought them;" who not only do not allow him to be
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the supreme God, but deny him to be any God at all. I believe the most eminent of these that has appeared in *England*, at least in the present century, was a man of great learning and uncommon abilities, Dr. *John Taylor*, for many years Pastor at *Norwich*, afterwards President at the Academy at *Warrington*. Yet it cannot be denied, that he treats our Lord with great civility: he gives him very good words: he terms him "a very worthy personage," yea, "a man of consummate virtue."

5. Next to these are the Arians. But I would not be thought to place these in the same rank with the *Socinians*. There is a considerable difference between them. For, whereas the former deny Christ to be any God at all, the latter do not: they only deny him to be *the great God*? They willingly allow, nay, contend, that he is a *little God*. But this is attended with a peculiar inconvenience. It totally destroys the unity of the Godhead. For, if there be a great God, and a little God, there must be two Gods. But waving this, and keeping to the point before us. All who speak of Christ as inferior to the Father, tho' it be ever so little, do undoubtedly "know him after the flesh:" not as "the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person, as upholding, bearing up all things, both in heaven and earth, by the

the word of his power," the same powerful word, whereby of old time he called them all into being.

6. There are some of these, who have been bold to claim that great and good man Dr. *Watts*, as one of their own opinion: and in order to prove him so, they have quoted that fine Soliloquy, which is published in his posthumous works. Yet impartial men will not allow their claim, without stronger proof than has yet appeared. But if he is clear of this charge, he is not equally clear, of "knowing Christ after the flesh," in another sense. I was not aware of this, but read all his works with almost equal admiration, when a person of deep piety as well as judgment, was occasionally remarking, "That some of the Hymns printed in his *Horæ Lyricæ*, dedicated to Divine Love, were (as he phrased it) too *amorous*, and fitter to be address'd by a lover to his fellow-mortal, than by a sinner to the most High God." I doubt, whether there are not some other Writers, who, tho' they believe the Godhead of Christ, yet speak in the same unguarded manner.

7. Can we affirm, that the Hymns published by a late great man (whose memory I love and esteem) are free from this fault? Are they not full of expressions, which strongly favour of "know-
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ing Christ after the flesh?" Yea, and in a more gross manner, than any thing which was ever before published in the *English* tongue. What pity is it, that those coarse expressions should appear in many truly spiritual Hymns! How often in the midst of excellent verses, are lines inserted which disgrace those that precede and follow? Why should not all the compositions in that book, be not only as poetical, but likewise as rational and as scriptural as many of them are acknowledged to be?

8. It was between fifty and sixty years ago, that by the gracious Providence of God, my brother and I in our voyage to *America*, became acquainted with the (so called) *Moravian Brethren*. We quickly took knowledge what spirit they were of, six and twenty of them being in the same ship with us. We not only contracted much esteem, but a strong affection for them. Every day we conversed with them, and consulted them on all occasions. I translated many of their Hymns for the use of our own congregations. Indeed, as I durst not implicitly follow any man, I did not take all that lay before me, but selected those which I judged to be most scriptural, and most suitable to sound experience. Yet I am not sure, that I have taken sufficient care, to pare off every improper word or expression, every one that may seem to border

set on a familiarity, which does not so well suit the mouth of a worm of the earth, when addressing himself to the God of heaven. I have indeed particularly endeavoured, in all the Hymns which are addressed to our blessed Lord, to avoid every *fondling* expression, and to speak as to the Most High God, to him that is "in glory equal with the Father, in majesty co-eternal."

9. Some will probably think, that I have been over-scrupulous, with regard to one particular word, which I never use myself either in verse or prose, in praying or preaching, tho' it is very frequently used by modern Divines, both of the *Romish* and *Reformed* Churches. It is the word *dear*. Many of these frequently say, both in preaching, in prayer, and in giving thanks, "Dear Lord, or dear Saviour:" and my Brother used the same in many of his Hymns, even as long as he lived. But may I not ask, Is not this using too much familiarity with the great Lord of heaven and earth? Is there any scripture, any passage, either in the Old or New Testament which justifies this manner of speaking? Does any of the inspired writers make use of it, even in the poetical scriptures? Perhaps some would answer, "Yes, the apostle *Paul* uses it. He says, *God's dear Son*." I reply, first, This does not reach the case: for
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the word which we render *dear*, is not here addressed to *Christ* at all, but only spoken of him. Therefore it is no precedent of, or justification of our addressing it to him. I reply, secondly, It is not the same word. Translated literally, the sentence runs, not *his dear Son*, but *the Son of his love*, or *his beloved Son*. Therefore I still doubt, whether any of the inspired writers ever addresses the word either to the Father or the Son. Hence I cannot but advise all lovers of the Bible, if they use the expression at all, to use it very sparingly, seeing the scripture affords neither command nor precedent for it. And surely "if any man speaks," either in preaching or prayer, he "should speak as the oracles of God!" Do we not frequently use this unscriptural expression of our blessed Lord, in private conversation also? And are we not then especially apt to speak of him as a mere man? Particularly when we are describing his sufferings, how easily do we slide into this? We do well to be cautious in this matter. Here is not room for indulging a warm imagination. I have sometimes almost scrupled singing (even in the midst of my Brother's excellent Hymn)

"That dear, disfigured face,"
or that glowing expression,

"Drop thy warm blood upon my heart."

Left it should seem to imply the forgetting I am speaking of "the man, that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." Altho' he so "humbled himself as to take upon him the form of a servant, to be found in fashion as a man:" yea, tho' he "was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross:" yet let it ever be remembered, that "he thought it not robbery to be equal with God." And let our hearts still cry out, "Thou art exceeding glorious: thou art clothed with majesty and honour."

11. Perhaps some may be afraid, lest the restraining from these warm expressions, or even gently checking them, should check the fervour of our devotion. It is very possible it may check, or even prevent some kind of fervour, which has passed for devotion. Possibly it may prevent loud shouting, horrid, unnatural screaming, repeating the same words twenty or thirty times, jumping two or three feet high, and throwing about the arms or legs, both of men and women, in a manner shocking not only to religion, but to common decency. But it never will check, much less prevent true scriptural devotion. It will rather enliven the prayer that is properly address'd to Him, who, tho' he was very man, yet was very God. Who, tho' he was born of a woman to redeem man, yet

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was God from everlasting and world without end.

12. And let it not be thought, that the "knowing Christ after the flesh," the considering him as a mere man, and, in consequence, using such language in public as well as private, as is suitable to those conceptions of him, is a thing of a purely indifferent nature, or however of no great moment. On the contrary, the using this improper familiarity with God our Creator, our Redeemer, our Governor, is naturally productive of very evil fruits. And that not only in those that speak, but also to those that hear them. It has a direct tendency to abate that tender reverence due to the Lord their Governor. It insensibly damps

"That speechless awe, which dares not move,
And all the silent heaven of love."

It is impossible we should accustom ourselves to this odious and indecent familiarity with our Maker, while we preserve in our minds a lively sense of what is painted so strongly in those solemn lines,

"Dark with excessive bright his skirts appear,
Yet dazzle heaven, that brightest Seraphim
Approach not, but with both wings veil their
eyes."

13. Now, would not every sober Christian sincerely desire, constantly to experience such a love to his Redeemer (seeing he is God as well as man) as is mixt with angelic fear? Is it not this very temper which good Dr. *Watts* so well expresses in those lines,

“ Thy mercy never shall remove

From men of heart sincere :

Thou sav’st the souls, whose humble love

Is join’d with holy fear.”

14. Not that I would recommend a cold, dead, formal prayer, out of which both love and desire, hope and fear are excluded. Such seems to have been “ the calm and undisturbed method of prayer,” so strongly recommended by the late Bishop *Hoadly*, which occasioned for some years so violent a contest in the religious world. Is it not probable, that the well-meaning Bishop had met with some of the Mystics or Quietists, (such as *Madam Guion* or the Archbishop of *Cambray*) and that having no experience of these things, he patched together a theory of his own, as nearly resembling theirs as he could? But it is certain, nothing is farther from apathy than real, scriptural devotion. It excites, exercises, and gives full scope to all our nobler passions; and excludes none but those that are wild,

wild, irrational, and beneath the dignity of man.

15. But how then can we account for this, that so many holy men, men of truly elevated affections, not excepting pious *Kempis* himself, have so frequently used this manner of speaking, these *fondling* kind of expressions? Since we cannot doubt but they are truly pious men? It is allowed they were; but we do not allow, that their judgment was equal to their piety. And hence it was that their really good affections a little exceeded the bounds of reason, and led them into a manner of speaking, not authorized by the oracles of God. And surely these are the true standard, both of our affections and our language. But did ever any of the holy men of old speak thus, either in the Old or in the New Testament? Did *Daniel*, the *man greatly beloved*, ever thus express himself to God? Or did "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and who doubtless loved his Master with the strongest affection, leave us an example of addressing him thus? Even when he was on the verge of glory? Even then his concluding words were not *fond*, but solemn, *Come, Lord Jesus!*

16. The sum of all is, We are to "honour the Son even as we honour the Father." We are to pay Him the same worship as we pay

to the Father. We are to love him with all
our heart and soul: and to consecrate all we
have and are, all we think, speak and do, to
the Three-One GOD, Father, Son, and Spirit,
world without end!

Plymouth-Dock,

August 15, 1789.

A SERMON ON MATTHEW VI. 22, 23.

If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light: but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. Therefore if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

1. **S**IMPLICITY and purity, says a devout man, are the two wings that lift the soul up to heaven: simplicity, which is in the intention, and purity, which is in the affections." The former of these, that great and good man Bishop Taylor, recommends with much earnestness, in the beginning of his excellent book, "Rules of holy living and dying." He sets out with insisting upon this, as the very first point in true religion, and warns us, that without this, all our endeavours after it, will be vain and ineffectual. The same truth, that strong and elegant writer, Mr. Law, earnestly presses in his "Serious call to a devout life." A treatise which will hardly be excelled, if it be equalled, in the *English* tongue, either for beauty of expression, or for justness and depth of thought. And who can censure any follower of Christ, for laying ever so great stress on this point, that considers the manner wherein
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our Master recommends it, in the words above recited?

2. Let us attentively consider this whole passage, as it may be literally translated. "The eye is the lamp of the body." And what the eye is to the body, the intention is to the soul. We may observe, with what exact propriety our Lord places simplicity of intention, between worldly desires, and worldly cares, either of which directly tend to destroy it. It follows, "If thine eye be single," singly fixed upon God, "thy whole body," that is, all thy soul shall be filled with holiness and happiness. "But if thine eye be evil," not single, aiming at any other object, seeking any thing beneath the sun, "thy whole body shall be full of darkness: and if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?" How remote not only from all real knowledge, but from all real holiness and happiness?

3. Considering these things, we may well cry out, How great a thing it is to be a Christian, to be a real, inward, scriptural Christian! Conformed in heart and life to the will of God! Who is sufficient for these things? None, unless he be born of God. I do not wonder, that one of the most sensible Deists should say, "I think the Bible is the finest book I ever read in my life, yet I have an insuperable objection to it."

it. It is *too good*. It lays down such a plan of life, such a scheme of doctrine and practice, as is far too excellent for weak silly men to aim at, or attempt to copy after." All this is most true, upon any other than the scriptural hypothesis. But this being allowed, all the difficulty vanishes into air. For, if "all things are possible with God, then all things are possible to him that believeth."

4. But let us consider, First, the former part of our Lord's declaration, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light:" Secondly, the latter part, "If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness:" and Thirdly, the dreadful state of those, whose eye is not single: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

I. 1. And first, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." If thine eye be single, if God is in all thy thoughts, if thou art constantly aiming at him that is invisible: if it be thy intention in all things, small and great, in all thy conversation to please God, to do not thy own will, but the will of him that sent thee into the world. If thou canst say, not to any creature, but to him that made thee for himself,

"I view thee,—Lord and end of my desires."

Then

Then the promise will certainly take place, "Thy whole body shall be full of light;" thy whole soul shall be filled with the light of heaven, with the glory of the Lord resting upon thee. In all thy actions and conversation, thou shalt have not only the testimony of a good conscience toward God, but likewise of his Spirit bearing witness with thy spirit, that all thy ways are acceptable to him.

2. When thy whole soul is full of this light, thou wilt be able (according to *St. Paul's* directions to the *Thessalonians*;) to "rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in every thing to give thanks." For who can be constantly sensible of the loving presence of God, without *rejoicing evermore*? Who can have the loving eye of his soul, perpetually fixt upon God, but he will "pray without ceasing?" For his "heart is unto God without a voice, and his silence speaketh unto him." Who can be sensible, that this loving Father is well pleased with all he does and suffers, but he will be constrained "in every thing to give thanks," knowing that all things "work together for good."

3. Thus shall "his whole body be full of light." The light of knowledge is doubtless one thing here intended, arising from "the unction of the Holy One, which abideth with him; and teacheth him of all things," all the things which

which it is now necessary for him to know, in order to please God. Hereby he will have a clear knowledge of the divine will in every circumstance of life. Not without the means, but in the use of all those means, which God has furnished him with. And walking in this light, he cannot but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will continually advance in all holiness, and in the whole image of God.

II. Our Lord observes, Secondly; "If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." If it be evil, that is, not single, (for the eye, which is not single, is evil) "thy whole body shall be full of darkness." It is certain, there can be no medium, between a single eye, and an evil eye. For, whenever we are not aiming at God, we are seeking happiness in some creature. And this, whatever that creature may be, is no less than idolatry. It is all one, whether we aim at the pleasures of sense, the pleasures of the imagination, the praise of men, or riches: all which, St. John comprizes under that general expression, "the love of the world." The eye is evil, if we aim at any of these; or indeed at any thing under the sun. So far as you aim at any of these, indeed, at any thing beneath God, your whole
soul

soul and the whole course of your life, will be full of darkness. Ignorance of yourselves, ignorance of your real interest, ignorance of your relation to God, will surround you with impenetrable clouds, with darkness that may be felt. And so long as the eye of your soul rests upon all or any of these, those will continue to surround your soul, and cover it with utter darkness.

2. With how many instances of this melancholy truth, that those whose eye is not single, are totally ignorant of the nature of true religion, are we surrounded on every side? How many even of good sort of people, of them whose lives are innocent, are as ignorant of themselves, of God, and of worshipping him in spirit and in truth, as either *Mahometans* or *Heathens*. And yet they are not any way defective in natural understanding. And some of them have improved their natural abilities by a liberal education, whereby they have laid in a considerable stock of deep and various learning. Yet how totally ignorant are they of God and of the things of God! How unacquainted both with the invisible and the eternal world! O why do they continue in this deplorable ignorance? It is the plain effect of this; their eye is not single. They do not aim at God: he is not in all their thoughts.

thoughts. They do not desire or think of heaven; therefore they sink deep as hell.

3. For this reason they are as far from holiness, as they are from valuable knowledge. It is because their eye is not single, that they are such strangers to vital religion. Let them be ever so accomplished in other respects, let them be ever so learned, ever so well versed in every branch of polite literature; yea, ever so courteous, so humane; yet if their eye is not singly fixt on God, they can know nothing of scriptural religion. They do not even know what Christian holiness means: what is the entrance of it, *the new birth*, with all the circumstances attending it: they know no more of this, than do the beasts of the field. Do they repent and believe the gospel? How much less are they renewed in the spirit of their minds, in the image of him that created them? As they have not the least experience of this, so they have not the least conception of it. Were you to name such a thing, you might expect to hear, "Much religion hath made thee mad:" so destitute are they, whatever accomplishments they have beside, of the only religion which avails with God.

4. And till their eye is single, they are as far remote from happiness as from holiness. They may now and then have agreeable dreams from

“ Wealth, honour, pleasure, or what else
This short enduring world can give.”

But none of these can satisfy the appetite of an immortal soul. Nay, all of them together cannot give rest, which is the lowest ingredient of happiness, to a never-dying spirit, which God created for the enjoyment of himself. The hungry soul, like the busy bee, wanders from flower to flower; but it goes off from each, with an abortive hope, and a deluded expectation. Every creature cries (some with a loud, and others with a secret voice,) “ Happiness is not in *me*.” The height and the depth, proclaim to an attentive ear, “ The Creator hath not implanted in me a capacity of giving happiness: Therefore, with all thy skill and pains, thou canst not extract it from me.” And indeed, the more pains any of the children of men take, to extract it from any earthly object, the greater will their chagrin be, the more secure their disappointment.

5. But altho’ the vulgar herd of mankind can find no happiness; altho’ it cannot be found in the empty pleasures of the world, may it not be found in learning, even by him that has not a single eye? Surely

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soul, as the eye does to the body; to direct thy understanding, passions, affections, tempers, all thy thoughts, words and actions: if this principle itself be darkened, be set wrong, and put darkness for light: How great must that darkness be; how terrible its effects!

2. In order to see this in a stronger point of view, let us consider it in a few particular instances. Begin with one of no small importance. Here is a father chusing an employment for his son: If his eye be not single, if he does not singly aim at the glory of God in the salvation of his soul: If it be not his one consideration what calling is likely to secure him the highest place in heaven: Not the largest share of earthly treasure, or the highest preferment in the church; the light which is in him is manifestly darkness: And O how great is that darkness! The mistake which he is in, is not a little one, but inexpressibly great. What! Do not you prefer his being a cobbler on earth, and a glorious saint in heaven, before his being a lord on earth, and a damned spirit in hell? If not, how great, unutterably great is the darkness that covers your soul! What a fool, what a dolt, what a madman is he, how stupid beyond all expression, who judges a palace upon earth to be preferable to a throne in heaven? How unspeakably is his understanding

standing darkened, who, to gain for his child the honour that cometh of men, will intail upon him everlasting shame in the company of the devil and his angels!

3. I cannot dismiss this subject yet, as it is of the utmost importance. How great is the darkness of that execrable wretch, (I can give him no better title, be he rich or poor,) who will sell his own child to the devil? Who will barter her own eternal happiness, for any quantity of gold or silver? What a monster would any man be accounted, who devoured the flesh of his own offspring? And is not he as great a monster, who by his own act and deed, gives her to be devoured by that roaring lion? As he certainly does, (so far as is in his power,) who marries her to an ungodly man. "But he is rich: But he has ten thousand pounds!" What if it were a hundred thousand? The more the worse, the less probability will she have of escaping the damnation of hell. With what face wilt thou look upon her, when she tells thee in the realms below, "Thou hast plunged me into this place of torment. Hadst thou given me to a good man, however poor, I might have now been in Abraham's bosom. But O! what have riches profited me! They have sunk both me and them into hell!"

4. Are any of you that are called Methodists, thus merciful to your children? Seeking to *marry them well*, (as the *cant* phrase is,) that is, to sell them to some purchaser, that has much money, but little or no religion? Is then the light that is in *you* also darkness? Are ye too regarding God less than mammon? Are ye also without understanding? Have ye profited no more by all ye have heard? Man, woman, think what ye are about! Dare *you* also sell your child to the devil? You undoubtedly do this, (as far as in *you* lies,) when you marry a son or a daughter, to a child of the devil, tho' it be one that wallows in gold and silver. O take warning in time! Beware of the gilded bait! Death and hell are hid beneath. Prefer grace before gold and precious stones. Glory in heaven, to riches on earth! If you do not, you are worse than the very Canaanites. They only made their children pass *thro' the fire* to Moloch. You make yours *pass into the fire* that never shall be quenched, and to stay in it for ever! O how great is the darkness that causes you, after you have done this, to *wipe your mouth and say, you have done no evil!*

5. Let us consider another case, not far distant from this. Suppose a young man, having finished his studies at the University, is desirous to minister in holy things, and accordingly enters

enters into orders : What is his intention in this ? What is the end he proposes to himself ? If his eye be single, his one design is, to save his own soul, and them that hear him : To bring as many sinners as he possibly can, out of darkness into marvellous light. If on the other hand his eye be not single, if he aims at ease, honour, money, or preferment, the world may account him a wise man ; but God says unto him, “ Thou fool ! ” And while the light which is in him is thus darkness, *how great is that darkness !* What folly is comparable to his folly ! One peculiarly dedicated to the God of heaven, to *mind earthly things !* A worldly clergyman is a fool above all fools, a madman above all madmen ! Such vile, infamous wretches as these, are the real “ ground of the contempt of the clergy.” Indolent clergymen, pleasure-taking clergymen, money-loving clergymen, praise-loving clergymen, preferment-seeking clergymen ; these are the wretches that cause the order in general to be contemned. These are the pests of the Christian world, the grand nuisance of mankind, a stink in the nostrils of God. Such as these were they, who made St. Chrysostom to say, “ Hell is paved with the souls of Christian priests.”

6. Take another case : Suppose a young woman of an independent fortune, to be addressed

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at the same time by a man of wealth, without religion, and a man of religion, without wealth ; in other words, by a rich child of the devil, or a poor child of God : What shall we say, if, other circumstances being equal, she prefers the rich man to the good man ? It is plain, her eye is not single ; therefore her foolish heart is darkened, and how great is that darkness, which makes her judge gold and silver a greater recommendation than holiness ? Which makes a child of the devil, with money, appear more amiable to her, than a child of God without it ? What words can sufficiently express the inexcusable folly of such a choice ? What a laughing-stock, (unless she severely repent,) will she be to all the devils in hell, when her wealthy companion has dragged her down to his own place of torment ?

6. Are there any of you that are present before God, who are concerned in any of these matters ? Give me leave with “ great plainness of speech, to apply to your consciences in the sight of God.” You, whom God has intrusted with sons or daughters, is your eye single in chusing partners for them ? What qualifications do you seek in your sons and daughters in law ? Religion or riches ? Which is your first consideration ? Are you not of the old Heathen’s mind,

Quærenda

*Quærenda pecunia primum,
Virtus post nummos?*

Seek money first : Let virtue then be sought.

Bring the matter to a point. Which will you prefer? A rich Heathen, or a pious Christian? A child of the devil with an estate? Or the child of God without it? A lord or gentleman, with the devil in his heart? (He does not hide it : His speech bewrayeth him.) Or a tradesman, who, you have reason to believe, has Christ dwelling in his heart? O how great is that darkness which makes you prefer a child of the devil to a child of God? Which causes you to prefer the poor trash of worldly wealth, which flies as a shadow, to the riches of eternal glory!

8. I call upon you more especially, who are called *Methodists*. In the sight of the great God, upwards of fifty years I have administered unto you, I have been your servant for Christ's sake. During this time I have given you many solemn warnings on this head. I now give you one more, perhaps the last. Dare any of you, in chusing your calling or situation, eye the things on earth, rather than the things above? In chusing a profession, or a companion for life for your child, do you look at earth or heaven? And can you deliberately prefer, either for yourself

or

or your offspring, a child of the devil with money, to a child of God without it? Why the very Heathens cry out,

O. curvæ in terras animæ, & celestium inanes !

O souls bowed down to earth, strangers to heaven.

Repent, repent of your vile earthly-mindedness ! Renounce the title of Christians, or prefer, both in your own case, and the case of your children, grace to money, and heaven to earth. For the time to come, at least, *let your eye be single, that your whole body may be full of light !*

Bristol,

Sept. 25, 1789.

A SERMON

A SERMON ON LUKE XII. 20.

But GOD said unto him, Thou fool!

1. **B**UT one of these fools is commonly wiser in his own eyes than seven men that can render a reason. If it were possible for a Christian, for one that has the mind which was in Christ, to despise any one, he would cordially despise those, who suppose *they are the men*, and wisdom shall die with them! You may see one of these painted to the life, in the verses preceding the text. “The ground of a certain rich man, (says our blessed Lord,) brought forth plenteously,” ver. 17, &c. “And he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do? for I have no room where to bestow my fruits. And he said, This will I do, I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my goods and my fruits. And I will say to my soul, “Soul thou hast much goods laid up for many years: Take thy ease; eat, drink, and be merry;” but God said unto him, *Thou fool!*”

2. I propose, by the assistance of God, first, to open and explain these few full words, and then to apply them to your conscience. First,
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to open and explain them. A little before, our Lord had been giving a solemn caution to one who spoke to him about *dividing his inheritance. Beware of covetousness: For the life of a man, that is, the happiness of it, "does not consist in the abundance of the things that he possesseth."* To prove and illustrate this weighty truth, our Lord relates this remarkable story. It is not improbable, it was one that had lately occurred, and that was fresh in the memory of some that were present. "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plenteously." The riches of the ancients consisted chiefly in the fruits of the earth. "And he said within himself, What shall I do?" The very language of want and distress! The voice of one that is afflicted and groaning under his burden: What shalt thou do? Why, are not those at the door, whom God hath appointed to receive what thou canst spare? What shalt thou do? Why *disperse* abroad and give to the poor. Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked. Be a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow. Freely thou hast received, freely give. O no! He is wiser than this comes to: He knows better than so. "And he said, This will I do,"—without asking God's leave, or thinking about him any more than if there were no God in heaven or on earth;—"I will pull
down

down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my goods and all my fruits." *My fruits!* They are as much thine as the clouds that fly over thy head! As much as the winds that blow around thee; which doubtless thou canst hold in thy fists!—"And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years." Soul, thou hast much goods! Are then corn, and wine, and oil, the goods of an immortal spirit? "Laid up for many years." Who told thee so? Believe him not, he was a liar from the beginning. He could not prolong thy life, if he would. God alone is the giver of life and death. And he would not if he could, but would immediately drag thee to his own, sad abode. "Soul, take thy ease, eat, drink, and be merry!" How replete with folly and madness is every part of this wonderful soliloquy! "Eat and drink! Will thy spirit then eat and drink? Yea, but not of earthly food! Thou wilt soon eat livid flame, and drink of the lake of fire burning with brimstone. But wilt thou then drink and be merry? Nay, there will be no mirth in those horrid shades. Those caverns will resound with no music, but weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

3. But while he was applauding his own wisdom, "God said unto him, Thou fool! This

night shall thy soul be required of thee. And then whose shall those things be, which thou hast prepared?"

4. Let us consider his words a little more attentively. He said within himself, "What shall I do?" And is not the answer ready! Do good. Do all the good thou canst. Let thy plenty supply thy neighbours' wants, and thou wilt never want something to do. Canst thou find none that need the necessaries of life? That are pinched with cold or hunger? None that have not raiment to put on? Or a place where to lay their head? None that are wasted with pining sickness? None that are languishing in prison? If you duly considered our Lord's words, "The poor have you always with you," you would no more ask, "What shall I do?"

5. How different was the purpose of this poor madman? "I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my goods." You may just as well bury them in the earth, or cast them into the sea. This will just as well answer the end, for which God intrusted thee with them.

6. But let us examine a little further, the remaining part of his resolution. "I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy ease, eat, drink and be merry." What are these the goods of a never-

never-dying spirit? As well may thy body feed on the fleeting breeze, as thy soul on earthly fruits. Excellent counsel then to such a spirit, to eat and drink, to a spirit made equal to angels, made an incorruptible picture of the God of glory, to feed not on corruptible things, but on the fruit of the tree of life, which grows in the midst of the paradise of God.

7. It is no marvel then, that God should say unto him, "Thou fool!" For this terrible reason, were there no other, "This night shall thy soul be required of thee!"

"And art thou born to die,
To lay this body down?
And must thy trembling spirit fly
Into a land unknown?
A land of deepest shade,
Unpierc'd by human thought;
The dreary regions of the dead,
Where all things are forgot?"

"And whose then shall all the things be which thou hast provided?"

II. 1. The second thing which I proposed was, to apply these considerations, which it is certain, are some of the most important, that can enter into the heart of man. In one sense, indeed, they have been applied already, for

what has been said, has been all application. But I wish every one who reads or hears these words, directly to apply them to his own soul.

2. Does it not concern every one that hears,—
 “The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully,” to enquire, Was this ever the case with *me*? Have I now, or have I ever heretofore, had more worldly goods given than I wanted? And what were my thoughts upon the occasion? Did I say in my heart, What shall I do? Was I distressed by my abundance? Did I think, “I have much goods laid up for many years?” Many years! Alas! What is thy life, if protracted to its utmost span? Is it not a vapour, that just appeareth, and vanisheth away: Say not then, I will pull down my barns; but say to God in the secret of thy heart, “Lord, save, or I perish.” See, my riches increase: let me not set my heart upon them. Thou seest I stand upon slippery ground, do thou undertake for me

“Uphold me, Saviour, or I fall!

O reach me forth thy gracious hand;

Only for help on thee I call!

Only by faith in thee I stand!”

See, Lord, how greatly my substance increase!
 Nothing less than thy almighty power can prevent

vent my setting my heart upon it, and of being crushed lower than the grave!

3. I ask thee, O Lord, "What shall I do?" First of all, endeavour to be deeply sensible of thy danger, and make it matter of earnest and constant prayer, that thou mayest never lose that sense of it. Pray that thou mayest always feel thyself standing on the brink of a precipice. Mean time let the language of thy heart be, "Having more means, I will do more good, by the grace of God than ever I did before. All the additional goods, which it hath pleased God to put into my hands, I am resolved to lay out with all diligence, in additional works of mercy. And hereby I shall "lay up for myself a sure foundation, that I may attain eternal life."

4. Thou no longer talkest of *thy* goods or *thy* fruits, knowing they are not thine, but God's. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: he is the proprietor of heaven and earth. He cannot divest himself of his glory: he must be the Lord, the possessor of all that is. Only he hath left a portion of his goods in thy hands, for such uses as he has specified. How long he will be pleased to lodge them with thee thou dost not yet know: perhaps only till to-morrow, or to night. Therefore talk not, think not of many years. Knowest thou not, that thou art a

creature of a day, that is crushed before the moth? That the breath which is in thy nostrils may be taken away at a moment's warning? That it may be resumed by him that gave it, at a time thou thinkest not of it? How knowest thou, but the next time thou liest down on thy bed thou mayest hear, "This night shall thy soul be required of thee."

5. Is not thy life as unstable as a cloud? Fluctuating as a bubble on the water? It fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. "Many years!" Who is sure of one day? And is it not an instance both of the wisdom and goodness of God, that he holds thy breath in his own hand, and deals it out from moment to moment, that thou mayest always remember, to "Live each day, as if it were the last" And after the few days thou shalt have spent under the sun, how soon will it be said,

"A heap of dust is all remains of thee,

'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be."

6. Consider again, the exquisite folly of that saying, "Soul, Thou hast much goods." Are then the products of the earth, food for a heaven-born spirit? Is there any composition of earth and water, yea, tho' air and fire be added thereto, which can feed those beings of a higher order?

order? What similitude is there between those ethereal spirits, and these base-born clods of earth? Examine the rest of this wise soliloquy, and see how it will apply to yourself! "Soul, take thy ease!" O vain hope! Can ease to a spirit spring out of the ground? Suppose the soil were ever so improved, can it yield such a harvest? "Eat, drink and be merry!" What! can thy soul eat and drink,

"Manna such as angels eat,
Pure delights for spirits fit?"

But these do not grow on earthly ground: they are only found in the paradise of God.

7. But, suppose the voice which commands life and death, pronounce, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose are all those things thou hast provided?" Alas! They are not thine? Thou hast no longer any part or lot in any of the things that are under the sun. Thou hast then no more share in any of these things of earth, than if the earth and the works of it were burnt up. Naked thou camest out of thy mother's womb, and naked shalt thou return. Thou hast heaped up many things; but for what end? To leave them all behind thee! Poor shade! Thou art now stript of all! Not even hope is left.

8. Observe

8. Observe the remark, which our Lord has left upon the whole occurrence. “*So is every one who layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God?*” Such a fool, such an eggregious madman, is beyond the power of language to express! However wise he may be in his own eyes, and perhaps in those of his neighbour, he is in reality the greatest fool under heaven, who heapeth up things, from which he must soon be separated for ever: and whoever is seeking happiness in the things that perish, is *laying up treasure for himself*. This is absolutely inconsistent with *being rich* (or rather, *growing toward God*) with obeying that scriptural command, “My son, give me thy heart.” He, who is a child of God, can truly say,

“All my riches are above!

All my treasure is thy love.”

He can testify, “All my desire is unto thee, and to the remembrance of thy name.”

9. Let every one who readeth these words, narrowly search his own heart. Where hast thou laid up thy treasure hitherto? Where art thou laying it up now? Art thou labouring to be rich toward God? Or to lay up earthly goods? Which takes up the greater part of thy thoughts? Thou that art careful for outward things, diligent in doing good, and exact in outward duties, beware

beware of covetousness, of decent honourable love of money, and of a desire to lay up treasures on earth. Lay up treasure in heaven! A few days hence, thou wilt step into a land of darkness, where earthly fruits will be of no avail, where thou wilt not be capable of eating and drinking or gratifying any of thy senses: what benefit wilt thou then receive from all thou hast laid up in this world? What satisfaction in all which thou hast treasured up, all thou hast left behind thee? Left behind thee! What! couldest thou then take nothing with thee into the everlasting habitations? Nay then, lay up treasure before thou go hence, which fadeth not away!

Balam, Feb, 19, 1790.

A SERMON

A SERMON ON MATT. XXII. 12.

How camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment ?

1. ¶ IN the verses preceding the text we read, “ After these things, Jesus spake to them again in parables and said, A certain king made a supper for his son. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw one who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment ? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants ; Bind him hand and foot and cast him into outer darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

2. Upon this parable one of our most celebrated Expositors comments in the following manner. “ The design of this parable is to set forth that gracious supply made by God to men in and by the preaching of the Gospel. To invite them to this, God sent forth his servants, the Prophets and Apostles”—And on these words, “ Why camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment,” he proceeds thus ; “ The punishment of which ought not to discourage us, or make us to turn our backs upon the holy ordinances.” Certainly it ought not ; but
nothing

nothing of this kind can be inferred from this parable, which has no reference to the Ordinances, any more than to Baptism and Marriage. And probably we should never have imagined it, but that the word *supper* occurred therein.

3. However most of the *English* Annotators have fallen into the same mistake with Mr. *Burkitt*. And so have thousands of their readers. Yet a mistake it certainly is. And such a mistake, as has not any shadow of foundation in the text. It is true, indeed, that none ought to approach the Lord's table without habitual, (at least, if not actual) preparation: that is, a firm purpose, to keep all the commandments of God, and a sincere desire to receive all his promises. But that obligation cannot be inferred from this text, tho' it may from many other passages of scripture. But there is no need of multiplying texts: one is as good as a thousand: there needs no more to induce any man of a tender conscience to communicate at all opportunities, than that single commandment of our Lord, "Do this in remembrance of me."

4. But, whatever preparation is necessary in order to our being worthy partakers of the Lord's Supper, it has no relation at all to the wedding garment mentioned in this parable. It cannot: for, that commemoration of his death was not
then

then ordained. It relates wholly to the proceedings of our Lord, when he comes in the clouds of heaven, to judge the quick and the dead; and to the qualifications which will then be necessary, to their "inheriting the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world."

5. Many excellent men, who are thoroughly apprized of this, who are convinced the wedding garment here mentioned, is not to be understood of any qualification for the Lord's Supper, but of the qualification for glory, interpret it of the righteousness of Christ, which (say they) is "The sole qualification for heaven: this being the only righteousness, wherein any man can stand in the day of the Lord." For who, they ask, will then dare to appear before the great God, save in the righteousness of his well beloved Son? "Shall we not then at least, if not before, find the need of having a better righteousness than our own! And what other can that be, than the righteousness of God our Saviour?" The late pious and ingenious Mr. *Hervey* descants largely upon this: particularly in his elaborate Dialogues between *Theron* and *Aspasio*.

6. Another elegant writer, now I trust with God, speaks strongly to the same effect, in the preface to his comment on St. *Paul's* Epistle to the *Romans*. "We certainly, says he, shall need a better righteousness than our own, where-
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in to stand at the bar of God in the day of judgment." I do not understand the expression. Is it Scriptural? Do we read it in the Bible? Either in the Old Testament or the New? I doubt, it is an unscriptural, awkward phrase, which has no determinate meaning. If you mean by that odd, uncouth question, "In whose righteousness are you to stand at the last day,"—For *whose sake*, or *by whose merit* do you expect to enter into the glory of God? I answer, without the least hesitation, for the sake of Jesus Christ, the righteous. It is through his merits alone that all believers are saved, that is, *justified*, saved from the guilt, *sanctified*, saved from the nature of sin, and *glorified*, taken into heaven.

7. It may be worth our while, to spend a few more words on this important point. Is it impossible to devise a more unintelligible expression than this,—“In what righteousness are we to stand before God at the last day?” Why do you not speak plain, and say, “*For whose sake* do you look to be saved?” Any plain peasant would then readily answer, “For the sake of Jesus Christ.” But all those dark, ambiguous phrases tend only to puzzle the cause, and open a way for unwary hearers to slide into Antinomianism.

8. Is there any expression similar to this of the wedding garment to be found in Holy Scrip-

ture? In the Revelation we find mention made of "linen white and clean, which is the righteousness of the saints." And this too many vehemently contend, means the righteousness of Christ. But how then are we to reconcile this with that passage in the seventh chapter, "They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Will they say, "The righteousness of Christ was washed and made white, in the blood of Christ?" Away with such Antinomian jargon. Is not the plain meaning this? It was from the atoning blood, that the very righteousness of the saints derived its value and acceptableness with God.

9. In the nineteenth chapter of the *Revelation*, at the ninth verse, there is an expression, which comes much nearer to this: "The wedding-supper of the Lamb." There is a near resemblance between this, and the Supper mentioned in the parable. Yet they are not altogether the same; there is a clear difference between them. The Supper mentioned in the parable belongs to the Church Militant. That mentioned in the *Revelation*, to the Church Triumphant. The one to the kingdom of God on earth; the other, to the kingdom of God in heaven. Accordingly in the former there may be found those, who have not a *wedding garment*. But there will be none such to be found in the latter.

No,

No, not "in that great multitude, which no man can number, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. They will all be kings and priests unto God, and shall reign with him for ever and ever.

10. Does not that expression, "The righteousness of the saints, point out, what is the wedding garment in the parable? It is the "Holiness, without which no man can see the Lord." The righteousness of Christ is, doubtless, necessary for any soul that enters into glory. But so is personal holiness too for every child of man. But it is highly needful to be observed, that they are necessary in different respects. The former is necessary to *intitle* us to heaven: the latter, to *qualify* us for it. Without the righteousness of Christ we could have no *claim* to glory; without holiness, we could have no *fitness* for it. By the former we become members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven. By the latter, "we are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

11. From the very time that the Son of God delivered this weighty truth to the children of men, That all who had not the wedding-garment would be cast into outward darkness, where are weeping and gnashing of teeth, the enemy of souls has been labouring to obscure it, that

they might still seek death in the error of their life: and many ways has he tried to disguise the Holiness, without which we cannot be saved. How many things have been palmed, even upon the christian world, in the place of this! Some of these are utterly contrary thereto, and subversive of it. Some were no ways connected with or related to it, but useless and insignificant trifles. Others might be deemed to be some part of it, but by no means the whole. It may be of use to enumerate some of them, lest ye should be ignorant of satan's devices.

12. Of the first sort, things prescribed as Christian Holiness, altho' flatly contrary thereto, is Idolatry: How has this, in various shapes, been taught, and is to this day, as essential to Holiness? How diligently is it now circulated, in a great part of the Christian Church? Some of their idols are silver and gold, or wood and stone, *graven by art of man's device*: some, men of like passions with themselves; particularly the Apostles of our Lord, and the Virgin Mary. To these they add numberless saints of their own creation, with no small company of angels.

13. Another thing as directly contrary to the whole tenure of true religion, is, what is diligently taught in many parts of the Christian Church: I mean, the Spirit of Persecution:
of

of persecuting their brethren even unto death. So that the earth has been often covered with blood by those who were called Christians, in order to "make their calling and election sure." It is true, many even in the Church of *Rome*, who were taught this horrid doctrine, now seem to be ashamed of it. But have the heads of that community as openly and explicitly renounced that capital doctrine of devils, as they avowed it in the Council of *Constance*, and practised it for many ages? Till they have done this, they will be chargeable with the blood of *Jerome* of *Prague*, basely murdered, and of many thousands, both in the sight of God and man.

14. Let it not be said, This does not concern us Protestants: we think and let think. We abhor the spirit of persecution, and maintain as an indisputable truth, that every rational creature has a right to worship God, as he is persuaded in his own mind. But are we true to our *own* principles? So far, that we do not use fire and faggot. We do not persecute unto blood, those that subscribe to our opinions. Blessed be God, the laws of our country do not allow of this: but is there no such thing to be found in *England*, as Domestic Persecution? The saying or doing any thing unkind to another for following his own conscience, is a species of persecution.

persecution. Now are we all clear of this? Is there no husband, who in this sense persecutes his Wife? Who uses her unkindly in word or deed, for worshipping God after her own conscience? Do no parents thus persecute their Children: no Masters or Mistresses their Servants? If they do this, and think they do God service therein, they "must not cast the first stone at the *Roman Catholics*.

15. When things of an *indifferent nature* are represented as necessary to salvation, it is a folly of the same kind, tho' not of the same magnitude. Indeed it is not a little sin, to represent trifles as necessary to salvation: such as going of pilgrimages, or any thing that is not expressly enjoined in the holy Scripture. Among these we may undoubtedly rank *Orthodoxy*, or right opinions. We know indeed that wrong opinions in religion naturally lead to wrong tempers or wrong practices; and that consequently it is our bounden duty to pray, that we may have a right judgment in all things. But still a man may judge as accurately as the devil, and yet be as wicked as he.

16. Something more excusable are they, who imagine Holiness to consist in things that are only a part of it. (That is, when they are connected with the rest; otherwise they are no part of it at all :) Suppose in doing no harm. And

how

how exceeding common is this? How many take Holiness and Harmlessness to mean one and the same thing? Whereas were a man as harmless as a post, he might be as far from Holiness, as heaven from earth. Suppose a man therefore to be exactly honest, to pay every one his own, to cheat no man, to wrong no man, to hurt no man, to be just in all his dealings: suppose a woman to be uniformly modest and virtuous in all her words and actions: suppose the one and the other, to be steady practisers of Morality, that is, of Justice, Mercy, and Truth: yet all this, though it is good, as far as it goes, is but a part of Christian Holiness. Yea, suppose a person of this amiable character to do much good, wherever he is, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, relieve the stranger, the sick, the prisoner, yea, and to save many souls from death: it is possible he may still fall far short of that holiness, without which he cannot see the Lord.

17. What then is that Holiness, which is the true Wedding Garment, the only qualification for glory? *In Christ Jesus* (that is, according to the Christian Institution) whatever be the case of the heathen world, "neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation," the renewal of the soul "in the image of God wherein it was created." In
 "Christ

“ Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.” It first, through the energy of God, worketh love to God and all mankind; and by this love, every holy and heavenly temper. In particular, lowliness, meekness, gentleness, temperance, and long suffering. “ It is neither circumcision,” the attending on all the Christian ordinances, “ nor uncircumcision,” the fulfilling of all heathen morality, but “ the keeping the commandments of God;” particularly those, “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.” In a word, Holiness is, the having “ the mind that was in Christ,” and the “ walking as Christ walked.”

18. Such has been my judgment for these threescore years, without any material alteration. Only about fifty years ago, I had a clearer view than before, of Justification by Faith: and in this, from that very hour I never varied, no not an hair's breadth. Nevertheless an ingenious man has publicly accused me of a thousand variations. I pray God, not to lay this to his charge! I am now on the borders of the grave, but by the grace of God, I still witness the same confession. Indeed some have supposed, that when I began to declare, “ By grace ye are saved,

ed through faith," I retracted what I had before maintained, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." But it is an entire mistake: these Scriptures well consist with each other: the meaning of the former being plainly this, By faith we are saved from sin, and made holy. The imagination that Faith *supercedes* Holiness, is the marrow of Antinomianism.

19. The sum of all is this, The God of love is willing to save all the souls that he has made. This he has proclaimed to them in his word, together with the terms of salvation, revealed by the Son of his Love, who gave his own life, that they that believe in him might have everlasting life. And for these he has prepared a kingdom, from the foundation of the world. But he will not force them to accept of it: He leaves them in the hands of their own counsel: He saith, "Behold I set before you, life and death; blessing and cursing; chuse life, that ye may live." Chuse Holiness by my grace, which is the way, the only way to everlasting life. He cries aloud, Be holy, and be happy; happy in this world, and happy in the world to come. "Holiness becometh his house for ever!" This is the Wedding Garment of all that are called to "the Marriage of the Lamb:" clothed in this, they will

will not be found naked: "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." But as to all those who appear in the last day without the Wedding Garment, the Judge will say, "Cast them into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Madeley, March 26. 1790.

A SERMON

A SERMON ON PSALM LXXIII. 20.

Even like as a dream when one awaketh, so shalt thou make their image to vanish out of the city.

I. **A**NY one that considers the foregoing verses, will easily observe, that the Psalmist is speaking directly of the wicked, that prosper in their wickedness. It is very common for these, utterly to forget that they are creatures of a day: to live as if they were never to die; as if their present state was to endure for ever: or at least, as if they were indisputably sure, that they “had much goods laid up for many years:” so that they might safely say, “Soul, take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” But how miserable a mistake is this! How often does God say to such a one, “Thou fool! This night shall thy soul be required of thee!” Well then may it be said of them, “O, how suddenly do they consume,—perish, and come to a fearful end! Yea, even like as a dream when one awaketh, so shalt thou make their image to vanish out of the city.”

2. But I would at present carry this thought farther: I would consider it in a general sense,
and

and shew how near a resemblance there is, between human life and a dream. An ancient Poet carries the comparison farther still, when he stiles life "the dream of a shadow." And so does *Cowley*, when he cries out,

"O Life, thou nothing's younger Brother,
So like, that we mistake the one for th' other."

But setting these and all other flights of Poetry aside, I would seriously enquire, wherein this resemblance lies, wherein the analogy between the one and the other does properly consist.

3. In order to this, I would enquire first, What is a dream? You will say, "Who does not know this?" Might you not rather say, Who *does* know? Is there any thing more mysterious in nature? Who is there that has not experienced it, that has not dreamed a thousand times? Yet he is no more able to *explain* the nature of it, than he is to grasp the skies. Who can give any clear, satisfactory account of the Parent of dreams, Sleep? It is true, many Physicians have attempted this: but they have attempted it in vain. They have talked learnedly about it; but have left the matter at last just as dark as it was before. They tell us some of its properties and effects. But none can tell, what is the *Essence* of it.

4. How-

4. However, we know the origin of dreams, and that with some degree of certainty. There can be no doubt, but some of them arise from the present constitution of the body, while others of them are probably occasioned by the passions of the mind. Again, we are clearly informed in Scripture, that some are caused by the operation of good angels: as others undoubtedly are owing to the power and malice of evil angels. (If we may dare to suppose, that there are any such now, or at least that they have any thing to do in the world!) From the same divine treasury of knowledge we learn, that on some extraordinary occasions, the Great Father of spirits has manifested himself to human spirits, "in dreams and visions of the night." But which of all these arise from natural, which from supernatural influence, we are many times not able to determine.

5. And how can we certainly distinguish between our dreams and our waking thoughts? What criterion is there by which we may surely know, whether we are awake or asleep? It is true, as soon as we awake out of sleep, we know we have been in a dream and are now awake. But how shall we know that a dream is such, while we continue therein? What is a Dream? To give a gross and superficial, not a philosophical account of it? It is a series of persons

and things presented to our mind in sleep, which have no being but in our own imagination. A dream therefore is a kind of digression from our real life. It seems to be an Echo, of what was said or done when we were awake. Or, may we say, a dream is a fragment of life, broken off at both ends, not connected, either with the part that goes before, or with that which follows after? And is there any better way of distinguishing our dreams from our waking thoughts, than by this very circumstance? It is a kind of parenthesis, inserted in life, as that is in a discourse which goes on equally well either with it, or without it. By this then we may infallibly know a dream, by its being broken off at both ends; by its having no proper connection with the real things, which either precede or follow it.

6. It is not needful to *prove*, that there is a near resemblance between these transient dreams, and the dream of life. It may be of more use, to *illustrate* this important truth, to place it in as striking a light as possible. Let us then seriously consider, in a few obvious particulars, the case of one that is just awaking out of life, and opening his eyes in eternity.

7. Let us then propose the case. Let us suppose we had now before us, one, that was just passed into the world of Spirits. Might not

you

you address such a new-born soul in some such manner as this? You have been an inhabitant of earth, forty, perhaps fifty or sixty years. But now God has uttered his voice, "Awake thou that sleepest!" You awake, you arise: you have no more to do, with these poor, transient shadows. Arise and shake thyself from the dust! See, all is *real* here! All is permanent, all eternal! Far more stable than the foundations of the earth; yea, than the pillars of that lower Heaven. Now that your eyes are open, see how inexpressibly different are all the things that are now round about you! What a difference do you perceive in yourself? Where is your body? Your house of clay? Where are your limbs? Your hands, your feet, your head? There they lie; cold, insensible!

"No anger, hereafter, or shame
 Shall redden the innocent clay;
 Extinct is the animal flame,
 And passion is vanish'd away!"

What a change is in the immortal Spirit! You see every thing around you: but how? Not with eyes of flesh and blood! You hear: but not by a stream of undulating air, striking on an extended membrane. You feel: but in how wonderful a manner! You have no nerves to convey the ethereal fire to the common sensory:

rather are you not now all eye, all ear, all feeling, all perception? How different, now you are thoroughly awake, are all the objects round about you? Where are the houses, and gardens, and fields, and cities, which you lately saw? Where are the rivers and seas, and everlasting hills? Was it then only in a dream, that our Poet discovered

“ Earth hath this variety from Heaven
Of pleasure situate in Hill and Dale ? ”

Nay, I doubt all these vanished away like smoke, the moment you awoke out of the body.

8. How strange must not only the manner of existence appear, and the place wherein you are, if it may be called *Place*, tho’ who can define, or describe the *Place of Spirits*, but the inhabitants of that unknown region? Whether they are of the number of those unhappy Spirits, that kept not their first estate, or of those holy ones, that still minister to the heirs of salvation? How strange are the employments of those Spirits, with which you are now surrounded? How bitter are they to the taste of those that are still dreaming upon earth? “ I have no relish, said one of these, (a much-applauded Wit, who has lately left the body,) for sitting upon a cloud all day long, and singing
praise

praise to God." We may easily believe him; and there is no danger of his being put to that trouble. Nevertheless this is no trouble to them who cease not day and night, but continually sing, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth!"

9. Suppose this to be the case with any of you, that are now present before God. It may be so to-morrow; perhaps to night; perhaps this night your "soul may be required of you." The dream of life may end, and *you* may wake into broad eternity. See, there lies the poor inanimate carcase, shortly to be sown in corruption and dishonour. But, where is the immortal, incorruptible spirit? There it stands naked before the eyes of God! Mean time, what is become of all the affairs which you have been eagerly engaged in, under the sun! What profit have you reaped of all your labour, and care? Does your money follow you? No, you have left it behind you; the same thing to you, as if it had vanished into air? Does your gay or rich apparel follow you? Your body is clothed with dust and rottenness. Your soul indeed is clothed with immortality. But O! What immortality: Is it an immortality of happiness and glory? Or of shame and everlasting contempt? Where is the honour, the pomp of the rich and great? The applause that sur-

rounded you? All gone: All are vanished away, "like as a shadow that departeth." "The play is over," said Monsieur *Moultray*, when he saw the ball pierce the temples of his dying master.* And what cared the Courtier for this? No more than if it had been the conclusion of a Faree or Dance. But while the buffoon slept on and took his rest, it was not so with the Monarch. Tho' he was not terrified with any thing on earth: he would be at the very gates of hell. Vain valour! In the very article of death, he grasped the hilt of his sword! But where was he the next moment, when the sword dropt out of his hand, and the soul out of his body? Then ended the splendid dream of royalty, of destroying cities, and of conquering kingdoms!

10. "How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!" What are the weapons that are so terrible among us, to the inhabitants of eternity? How are the wise, the learned, the poet, the critic fallen, and their glory vanished away! How is the beauty fallen, the late idol of a gazing crowd? In how compleat a sense are "the daughters of music brought low," and all the instruments thereof forgotten? Are you not now convinced, that (according to

* Charles XII. King of Sweden, at the siege of *Frederick-Ball*.

the Hebrew proverb) "a living dog is better than a dead lion?" For, the *living know*, ye *must know*, unless they obstinately refuse, "that they shall die. But the dead know not any thing," that will avail, for the ease of their pain, or to lessen their misery. Also "their hope and fear, and their desire," all are perished, all of them are fled: "they have not any portion in the things that are done under the sun!"

11. Where indeed is the *hope* of those who were lately laying deep schemes, and saying, "To-day, or to-morrow we will go to such a city, and continue there a year, and traffic, and get gain?" How totally had they forgotten that wise admonition, "ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For, what is your life? It is a vapour that appeareth awhile and then vanisheth away!" Where is all your business? Where your worldly cares? Your troubles or engagements? All these things are fled away like smoke: and only your soul is left. And how is it qualified for the enjoyment of this new world? Has it a relish for the objects and enjoyments of the invisible world? Are your affections loosened from things below, and fixt on things above? Fixt on that place, where Jesus sitteth at the right hand of God? Then happy are ye: and when he whom ye love shall appear, "ye shall also appear with him in glory."

12. But

12. But how do you relish the company that surrounds you? Your old companions are gone: a great part of them probably separated from you, never to return. Are your present companions angels of light? Ministring spirits, that but now whispered, "Sister spirit, come away!" "We are sent to conduct thee over that gulph into Abraham's bosom." And what are those? Some of the souls of the righteous, whom thou didst formerly relieve with "the mammon of unrighteousness?" And who are now commissioned by your common Lord, to *receive*, to welcome you "into the everlasting habitations?" Then the angels of darkness will quickly discern they have no part in you. So they must either hover at a distance, or flee away in despair. Are some of these happy spirits that take acquaintance with you, the same that travelled with you below, and bore a part in your temptations? That together with you fought the good fight of faith, and laid hold on eternal life? As you then wept together, you may rejoice together, you and your guardian angels perhaps, in order to increase your thankfulness, for being "delivered from so great a death." They may give you a view of the realms below & those

"Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell."

See on the other hand, the mansions which were
 " prepared for you, from the foundation of the
 world ! " O what a difference between the dream
 that is past, and the real scene that is now pre-
 sent with thee ! Look up ! See

" No need of the sun in that day,
 Which never is follow'd by night !
 Where Jesus's beauties display
 A pure and a permanent light. "

Look down ! What a prison is there !

" Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fire ! "

And what inhabitants ! What horrid fearful
 shapes, emblems of the rage against God and
 man ; the envy, fury, despair fixt within, caus-
 ing them to gnash their teeth at Him they so
 long despised ! Mean while does it comfort them
 to see, across the great gulph, the righteous in
 Abraham's bosom ? What a place is that ! What
 " a house of God, eternal in the heavens ! "
 Earth is only his footstool : yea,

" The spacious firmament on high,
 And all the blue ethereal sky. "

Well then may we say to its inhabitants,

" Proclaim the glories of your Lord,
 Dispers'd through all the heav'nly street ;
 Whose

Whose boundless treasures can afford
So rich a pavement for his feet."

And yet how inconsiderable is the glory of that house, compared to that of its great inhabitant! In view of whom all the first born sons of light, angels, archangels, and all the company of heaven, full of light as they are full of love,

"Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes."

13. How wonderful then, now the dream of life is over, now you are quite awake, do all these scenes appear! Even such a sight as never entered or could enter into your hearts to conceive! How are all those that "awake up after his likeness, now satisfied with it?" They have now a portion, real, solid, incorruptible, "that fadeth not away." Mean time, how exquisitely wretched are they, who (to wave all other considerations) have chosen for their portion those transitory shadows, which now are vanished, and have left them in an abyss of real misery, which must remain to all eternity!

14. Now, considering that every child of man, who is yet upon earth, must sooner or later wake out of this dream, and enter real life; how infinitely does it concern every one of us, to attend to this, before our great change comes! Of what importance

importance is it, to be continually sensible of the condition, wherein we stand? How advisable by every possible means to connect the ideas of time and eternity? So to associate them together, that the thought of one may never recur to your mind, without the thought of the other! It is our highest wisdom, to associate the ideas of the visible and invisible world, to connect temporal and spiritual, mortal and immortal being. Indeed in our common dreams we do not usually know we are asleep, whilst we are in the midst of our dream. As neither do we know it, while we are in the midst of the dream, which we call life. But you may be conscious of it now! God grant you may! before you awake in a winding sheet of fire!

15. What an admirable foundation for thus associating the ideas of time and eternity, of the visible and invisible world, is laid in the nature of religion! For what is religion? (I mean scriptural religion; for all other is the vainest of all dreams.) What is the very root of this religion? It is Immanuel, God with us! God in man! Heaven connected with earth! The unspeakable union of mortal with immortal. For "truly our fellowship (may all christians say) is with the Father," and with his Son Jesus Christ. God hath given us unto eternal life; and this life is in his Son." What follows? "He
that

that hath the Son hath life : and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

16. But how shall we retain a constant sense of this? I have often thought in my waking hours, "Now, when I fall asleep, and see such and such things, I will remember, it was but a dream." Yet I could not, while the dream lasted; and probably none else can. But it is otherwise with the dream of life, which we do remember to be such, even while it lasts. And if we do forget it, (as we are indeed apt to do) a friend may remind us of it. It is much to be wished, that such a friend were always near; one that would frequently sound in our ear, "awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead!" Soon you will awake into real life. You will stand a naked spirit in the world of spirits, before the face of the great God! See that you now hold fast that "eternal life, which he hath given you in his Son."

17. How admirably does this life of God branch out into the whole of religion! I mean scriptural religion. As soon as God reveals his Son in the heart of a sinner, he is enabled to say, "The life that I now live, I live by
"faith in the SON of GOD, who loved me, and
"gave himself for me." He then "rejoices in hope of the glory of God, even with joy unspeakable. And in consequence both of this
faith

faith and hope, the love of God is shed abroad in his heart, which filling the soul with love to all mankind, “ is the fulfilling of the law.”

17. And how wonderfully do both faith and love connect God with man, and time with eternity! In consideration of this, we may boldly say,—

“ Vanish then this world of shadows ;

Pass the former things away ;

Lord, appear ! appear to glad us,

With the dawn of endless day !

O conclude this mortal story ;

Throw this universe aside :

Come, eternal King of Glory,

Now descend,—and take thy Bride !”

A SERMON ON Hebrews, XI. 1.

Now Faith is the Evidence of things not seen.

1. **M**ANY times have I thought, many times have I spoke, many times have I wrote upon these words: and yet there appears to be a depth in them, which I am in no wise able to fathom. Faith is in one sense of the word, a divine conviction of God and of the things of God: in another (nearly related to, yet not altogether the same) it is a divine conviction of the invisible and eternal World. In this sense I would now consider,—

2. I am now an immortal spirit, strangely connected with a little portion of earth: but this is only for a while. In a short time I am to quit this tenement of clay, and to remove into another state,

“Which the living know not,
And the dead cannot,—or they may not tell!”

What kind of existence shall I then enter upon When my spirit has launched out of the body; how shall I feel myself? Perceive my own being? How shall I discern the things that are round about me, either material or spiritual objects?

jects? When my eyes no longer transmit the rays of light, how will the naked spirit *see*? When the organs of hearing are mouldered into dust, in what manner shall I *hear*? When the brain is of no further use, what means of *thinking* shall I have? When my whole body is resolved into senseless earth, what means shall I have of gaining *knowledge*?

3. How strange, how incomprehensible are the means whereby I shall then take knowledge even of the material world? Will things appear then as they do now? Of the same size, shape, and colour? Or will they be altered in any, or all these respects? How will the Sun, Moon, and Stars appear? The sublunary Heavens? The Planetary Heavens? The region of the fixt Stars? How the fields of Ether, which we may conceive to be millions of miles beyond them? Of all this we know nothing yet: and indeed we need to know nothing.

4. What then can we know of those innumerable objects, which properly belong to the invisible world? Which mortal eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into our heart to conceive? What a scene will then be opened, when the regions of *Hades* are displayed without a covering! Our *English* Translators seem to have been much at a loss, for a word to render this. Indeed two hundred years ago it

was tolerably exprest by the word *Hell*, which then signified much the same with the word *Hades*, namely, the invisible world. Accordingly, by Christ descending into Hell, they meant his body remained in the grave, his soul remained in *Hades*, which is the receptacle of separate spirits, from Death to the Resurrection. Here we cannot doubt but the spirits of the righteous are inexpressibly happy. They are, as St. Paul expresses it, *with the Lord*, favoured with so intimate a communion with him, as is *far better than* whatever the chief of the Apostles experienced while in this world. On the other hand, we learn from our Lord's own account of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, that the rich man, from the moment he left the world, entered into a state of torment. And *there is a great gulph fixt in Hades*, between the place of the holy, and that of unholy spirits, which it is impossible for either the one or the other to pass over. Indeed a gentleman of great learning, the honourable Mr. *Campbel*, in his account of the Middle State, published not many years ago, seems to suppose that wicked souls may amend in *Hades*, and then remove to a happier mansion. He has great hopes, that *the rich man* mentioned by our Lord in particular, might be purified by that penal fire, till in process of time, he might be qualified for a better abode. But who can re-

concile

concile this with *Abraham's* assertion, that none can pass over the *great gulph* ?

5. I cannot therefore but think that all those who are with *the rich man* in the unhappy division of *Hades*, will remain there, howling and blaspheming, cursing and looking upwards, till they are cast into "the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And on the other hand, can we reasonably doubt, but that those who are now in Paradise, in *Abraham's* bosom, all those holy souls, who have been discharged from the body, from the beginning of the world unto this day, will be continually ripening for heaven, will be perpetually holier and happier, till they are received into the "kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world."

6. But who can inform us, in what part of the Universe *Hades* is situated ? This abode of both happy and unhappy spirits, till they are reunited to their bodies ? It has not pleased God, to reveal any thing concerning it, in the Holy Scripture: and consequently, it is not possible for us, to form any judgment or even conjecture about it. Neither are we informed how either one or the other are employed, during the time of their abode there. Yet may we not improbably suppose, that the Governor of the world may sometimes permit wicked souls "To

do his gloomy errands in the deep?" Or perhaps, in conjunction with evil angels, to inflict vengeance on wicked men. Or will many of them be shut up in chains of darkness, unto the judgment of the great day? In the mean time, may we not probably suppose, that the spirits of the just, tho' generally lodged in Paradise, yet may sometimes, in conjunction with the holy angels, minister to the heirs of salvation? May they not

" Sometimes on errands of love,
Revisit their brethren below ?"

It is a pleasing thought, that some of these human Spirits, attending us with, or in the room of angels, are of the number of those, that were dear to us, while they were in the body. So that there is no absurdity in the question,

" Have ye your own flesh forgot,
By a common ransom bought ?
Can Death's interposing tide,
Spirits one in Christ divide ?"

But be this as it may, it is certain human spirits swiftly increase in knowledge, in holiness, and in happiness. Conversing with all the wise and holy souls that lived in all ages and nations from the beginning of the world. With angels and archangels, to whom the children of men
are

are no more than infants: and above all, with the eternal Son of God, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And let it be especially considered, whatever they learn, they will retain for ever. For they forget nothing. To forget is only incident to spirits that are clothed with flesh and blood.

7. But how will this material Universe appear, to a disembodied spirit? Who can tell whether any of these objects that surround us will appear the same as they do now: and if we know so little of these, what can we now know, concerning objects of a quite different nature? Concerning the spiritual world? It seems, it will not be possible for us to discern them at all, till we are furnished with senses of a different nature, which are not yet opened in our souls. These may enable us, both to penetrate the inmost substance of things, whereof we now discern only the surface, and to discern innumerable things, of the very existence whereof we have not now the least perception. What astonishing scenes will then discover themselves to our newly opening senses! Probably fields of Ether, not only ten fold, but ten thousand fold, "The length of this Terrene." And with what variety of furniture, animate and inanimate! How many orders of beings, not discovered by organs of flesh

flesh and blood. Perhaps,—Thrones, dominions, principedoms, virtues, powers?—Whether of those that retain their first habitations and primeval strength: or of those that rebelling against their Creator, have been cast out of heaven? And shall we not then, as far as angels ken, survey the bounds of creation, and see every place where the Almighty,—

“ Stop’d his rapid wheels, and said,—

“ This be thy just circumference, O world.”

Yea, shall we not be able to move, quick as thought, thro’ the wide realms of uncreated night? Above all, the moment we step into eternity, shall we not feel ourselves swallowed up of Him, who is in this and every place, who filleth heaven and earth? It is only the veil of flesh and blood which now hinders us from perceiving, that the great Creator cannot but fill the whole immensity of space? He is every moment above us, beneath us, and on every side. Indeed, in this dark abode, this land of shadows, this region of sin and death, the thick cloud, which is interposed between, conceals him from our sight. But the veil will disappear, and he will appear in unclouded majesty, God over all, blessed for ever!

8. How variously are the children of men employed in this world? In treading o’er—“ The
paths

paths they trod six thousand years before?" — But who knows how we shall be employed, after we enter that invisible world? A little of it we may conceive, and that without any doubt, provided we keep to what God himself has revealed in his word, and what he works in the hearts of his children. Let us consider first, what may be the employment of unholy spirits, from death to the resurrection. We cannot doubt but the moment they leave the body, they find themselves surrounded by spirits of their own kind, probably human as well as diabolical. What power God may permit these to exercise over them, we do not distinctly know. But it is not improbable, he may suffer satan to employ them, as he does his own angels, in inflicting death, or evils of various kinds on the men that know not God: for this end they may raise storms by sea or by land, they may shoot meteors through the air. They may occasion earthquakes, and in numberless ways afflict those whom they are not suffered to destroy. Where they are not permitted to take away life, they may inflict various diseases: and many of these which we judge to be natural, are undoubtedly diabolical. I believe this is frequently the case with Lunatics. It is observable, that many of those mentioned in Scripture, who are called Lunatics by one of the Evangelists, are termed

Dæmoniacs

Dæmoniacks by another. One of the most eminent Physicians I ever knew, particularly in cases of Infanity, the late Dr. *Deacon*, was clearly of opinion, that this was the case with many, if not with most Lunatics. And it is no valid objection to this, that these diseases are so often cured by natural means. For a wound inflicted by an evil spirit, might be cured as any other ; unless that spirit was permitted to repeat the blow.

9. May not some of these evil spirits be likewise employed in conjunction with evil angels, n tempting wicked men to sin, and in procuring occasion for them ? Yea, and in tempting good men to sin, even after they had escaped the corruption that is in the world. Herein doubtless they put forth all their strength, and greatly glory, if they conquer. A passage in an antient Author, may greatly illustrate this : (although I apprehend, he did not intend, that we should take it literally). “ Satan summoned his powers, and examined, what mischief each of ~~was~~ had done ? One said, I have set a house on fire, and ~~destroyed~~ all its inhabitants ? Another said, “ I have raised a storm at sea, and sunk a ship, and all on board perished in the waters.” Satan answered, “ Perhaps those that were burnt or drowned were saved ? ” A third said, “ I have been forty years tempting a holy man

man to commit adultery. And I have left him asleep in his sin." Hearing this, Satan rose to do him honour, and all hell resounded with his praise." Hear this, all ye that imagine you cannot fall from grace!

10. Ought not we then to be perpetually on our guard, against those subtle enemies? Tho' we see them not,

" A constant watch they keep :

They eye us night and day ;

And never slumber, never sleep,

Lest they should lose their prey."

Herein they join with " the rulers of the darkness (the intellectual darkness) of this world ;" the ignorance, wickedness and misery diffused thro' it, to hinder all good, and promote all evil! To this end they are continually " working with energy, in the children of disobedience. Yea, sometimes they work by them those *lying wonders*, that might almost deceive even the children of God.

11. But mean time, how may we conceive the inhabitants of the other part of *Hades*, the souls of the righteous to be employed? It has been positively affirmed by some philosophical men, that spirits have no place! But they do not observe, that if it were so, they must be omnipresent. An attribute which cannot be allowed to
any

any but the Almighty Spirit. The abode of these blessed spirits the ancient Jews were used to term Paradise: the same name which our Lord gave it, telling the penitent thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Yet in what part of the Universe this is situated, who can tell, or even conjecture, since it has not pleased God to reveal any thing concerning it. But we have no reason to think they are confined to this place: or indeed to any other. May we not rather say, that *servants of his*, as well as the holy angels, they *do his pleasure*, whether among the inhabitants of earth, or in any other part of his dominions? And as we easily believe, that they are swifter than the light, even as swift as thought, they are well able to traverse the whole Universe in the twinkling of an eye, either to execute the divine commands, or to contemplate the works of God. What a field is here opened before them! And how immensely may they increase in knowledge, while they survey his works of Creation or Providence, or his manifold wisdom in the Church! What depth of wisdom, of power, and of goodness do they discover in his methods of bringing many sons to glory! Especially while they conversed on any of these subjects, with the illustrious dead of antient days! With

Adam

Adam, first of men, with *Noah*, who saw both the primeval and the ruined world. With *Abraham*, the friend of God, with *Moses*, who was favoured to speak with God, as it were *face to face*; with *Job*, perfected by sufferings, with *Samuel*, *David*, *Solomon*, *Isaiah*, *Daniel*, and all the Prophets. With the Apostles, the noble army of Martyrs; and all the Saints who have lived and died to the present day; with our elder brethren, the holy angels, cherubim, seraphim, and all the companies of heaven! Above all the name of creature owns, with Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant. Mean time how will they advance in holiness, in the whole image of God wherein they were created. In the love of God and man, gratitude to their Creator, and benevolence to all their fellow-creatures. Yet it does not follow (what some earnestly maintain, that this general benevolence, will at all interfere with that peculiar affection, which God himself implants for our relations, friends, and benefactors. O no! Had you stood by his bed side, when that dying saint was crying out, "I have a father and a mother gone to heaven, to Paradise, the receptacle of happy spirits.) I have ten brothers and sisters gone to heaven: and now I am going to them, that am the eleventh! Blessed be God that I was born!" Would you have replied, "What, if you are

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going to them? They will be no more to you than any other persons: for you will not know them." Not know them! Nay, does not all that is in you recoil at that thought? Indeed Sceptics may ask, How do disembodied spirits know each other? I answer plainly, I cannot tell. But I am certain that they do. This is as plainly proved from one passage of Scripture, as it could be from a thousand. Did not *Abraham*, and *Lazarus* know each other in *Hades*, even afar off? Even tho' they were fixt on different sides of the *great gulph*? Can we doubt then whether the souls that are together in Paradise shall know one another? The Scripture therefore clearly decides this question. And so does the very reason of the thing. For we know, every holy temper which we carry with us into Paradise, will remain in us for ever. But such is gratitude to our benefactors. This therefore will remain for ever. And this implies, that the knowledge of our benefactors will remain, without which it cannot exist.

12. And how much will that add to the happiness of those spirits, who are already discharged from the body, that they are permitted to minister to those whom they have left behind? An indisputable proof of this we have, in the twenty-second chapter of the *Revelation*. When the

the apostle fell down to worship the glorious spirit which he seems to have mistaken for Christ, he told him plainly, "I am of thy fellow-servants, the Prophets;" not God, not an angel, but a human spirit. And in how many ways may they minister to the heirs of salvation. Sometimes by counteracting wicked spirits whom we cannot resist, because we cannot see them: sometimes by preventing our being hurt by men, or beasts, or inanimate creatures: how often may it please God to answer the prayer of good Bishop Kenn,

"O may thine angels while I sleep
Around my bed their vigils keep!
Their love angelical instil
Stop all the consequence of ill:

"May they celestial joys rehearse,
And thought to thought with me converse;
Or in my stead the whole night long
Sing to my God a grateful song."

And may not the Father of Spirits allot this office jointly to angels, and human spirits waiting to be made perfect?

13. It may indeed be objected, that God has no need of any subordinate agents of either angelical or human spirits, to guard his children, in their waking or sleeping hours; seeing He

that keepeth Israel doth neither slumber nor sleep. And certainly, He is able to preserve them by his own immediate power, yea, and he is able, by his own immediate power only, without any instruments at all, to supply the wants of all his creatures, both in heaven and earth. But it is, and ever was his pleasure, not to work by his own immediate power only, but chiefly by subordinate means, from the beginning of the world. And how wonderfully is his wisdom displayed, in adjusting all these to each other! So that we may well cry out, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all!"

14. This we know, concerning the whole frame and arrangement of the visible world. But how exceeding little do we now know, concerning the invisible? And we should have known still less of it, had it not pleased the Author of both worlds, to give us more than natural light, to give us "his word, to be a lantern to our feet, and a light in all our paths." And holy men of old, being assisted by his Spirit, have discovered many particulars, of which otherwise we should have had no conception.

15. And without Revelation, how little certainty of invisible things did the wisest of men obtain? The small glimmerings of light which
they

they had, were merely conjectural. At best they were only a faint, dim twilight, delivered from uncertain tradition; and so obscured by heathen fables, that it was but one degree better than utter darkness.

16. How uncertain the best of these conjectures was, may easily be gathered from their own accounts. The most finished of all these accounts, is that of the great *Roman Poet*. Where observe how warily he begins, with that apologetic Preface?—*Sit mihi fas audita loqui?*—"May I be allowed to tell what I have heard?"—And in the conclusion, lest any one should imagine, he believed any of these accounts, he sends the relator of them out of *Hades*, by the *ivory gate*, thro' which he had just informed us, that only dreams and shadows pass! A very plain intimation, that all which has gone before, is to be looked upon as a dream!

17. How little regard they had for all these conjectures, with regard to the invisible world, clearly appears from the words of his brother Poet, who affirms without any scruple,

*Esse aliquos manes & subterranea regna
Nec fieri credunt.*

"That there are Ghosts or Realms below, not even a man of them now believes."

So little could even the most improved reason discover concerning the invisible and eternal world. The greater cause have we, to praise the Father of lights, who hath opened the eyes of our understanding, to discern those things which could not be seen by eyes of flesh and blood : that He who of old time shined out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, and enlightened us with the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ ; the author and finisher of our faith ; by whom he made the worlds ; by whom he now sustains whatever he hath made : for,

“ Till nature shall her Judge survey,
The King Messiah reigns.”

These things we have believed upon the testimony of God : the Creator of all things visible and invisible : by this testimony we already know the things that now exist, though not yet seen, as well as those that will exist in their season, until this visible world shall pass away, and the Son of Man shall come in his glory.

18. Upon the whole, what thanks ought we to render to God, who has vouchsafed this *evidence of things unseen*, to the poor inhabitants of earth, who otherwise must have remained in utter darkness concerning them ? How invaluable

able a gift, is even this imperfect light, to the benighted sons of men? What a relief is it to the defects of our senses, and consequently of our understanding? Which can give us no information of any thing, but what is first presented to the senses. But hereby a new set of senses (so to speak) is opened in our souls: and by this means,

“ The things unknown to feeble sense,
Unseen by reason’s glimmering ray,
With strong, commanding evidence,
Their heav’nly origin display.

“ Faith lends its realizing light :
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly ;
Th’ Invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye ! ”

London, Jan. 17, 1791.

A SERMON

A SERMON ON JEREMIAH XVII. 9.

The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know ^{is} it?

1. **T**HE most eminent of the ancient Heathens have left us many testimonies of this. It was indeed their common opinion, that there was a time, when men in general were virtuous and happy: this they termed the *golden age*. And the account of this was spread thro' almost all nations. But it was likewise generally believed, that this happy age had expired long ago. And that men are now in the midst of the *iron age*. At the commencement of this, says the Poet,

Irrupit venæ perjoris in ævum
Omne nefas: fugere pudor, verumq: fidesq:
In quorum subiere locum fraudesq: doliq:
Insidiæque, & vis, & amor sceleratus habendi.

Immediately broke in
With a full tide, all wickedness and sin:
Shame, truth, fidelity swift fled away,
And cursed thirst of gold bore unresisted sway.

2. But

2. But how much more knowing than these old Pagans are the present generation of Christians ! How many laboured Panegyrics do we now read and hear on the Dignity of Human Nature ? One eminent Preacher, in one of his sermons preached and printed a few years ago, does not scruple to affirm, first, That men in general, (if not every individual,) are very *wise* : secondly, That men in general are very *virtuous*, and thirdly, That they are very *happy*. And I do not know, that any one yet has been so hardy, as to controvert the assertion.

3. Nearly related to them were the sentiments of an ingenious gentleman, who being asked, “ My Lord, what do you think of the Bible ? ” answered, “ I think it is the finest book I ever read in my life. Only that part of it which indicates the Mediatorial Scheme I do not understand. For I do not conceive there is any need of a Mediator between God and man. If indeed, continued he, I was a sinner, then I should need a Mediator. But I do not conceive, I am. It is true, I often act wrong for want of more understanding. And I frequently *feel* wrong tempers, particularly proneness to anger. But I cannot allow this to be a sin : for it depends on the motion of my blood and spirits, which I cannot help. Therefore it cannot be a sin. Or if it be, the blame must fall not on
me,

me, but on him that made me." The very sentiments of pious Lord Kaim, and modest Mr. Hume.

4. Some years ago a charitable woman discovered, That there was no sinner in the world, but the Devil. For, said she, " he *forces* men to act as they do, therefore they are unaccountable. The blame lights on Satan." But these more enlightened gentlemen have discovered, " That there is no sinner in the world but God. For he *forces* men to think, speak, and act as they do ; therefore the blame lights on God alone." Satan, avaunt ! It may be doubted, whether he himself ever uttered so foul a blasphemy as this.

5. But whatever unbaptized or baptized Infidels may say, concerning the innocence of mankind, He that made man, and that best knows what he has made, gives a very different account of him. He informs us, that " the heart of man," of all mankind, of every man born into the world, " is desperately wicked," and that it is " deceitful above all things," so that we may well ask, " Who can know it ? "

I. 1. To begin with this : " The heart of man is desperately wicked." In considering this, we have no need to refer to any particular sins. (These are no more than the leaves, or at most the fruits, which spring from that evil tree :) but rather to the general root of all. See

how

how this was first planted in heaven itself, by Lucifer, *Son of the morning*; till then undoubtedly "one of the first if not the first archangel;" "Thou saidst, I will sit upon the side of the North." See self-will the first-born of Satan! "I will be like the Most High." See pride, the twin-sister of self-will. Here was the true origin of evil. Hence came the inexhaustible flood of evils, upon the lower world. When Satan had once transfused his own self-will and pride into the parents of mankind, together with a new species of sin: Love of the world, the loving the creature above the Creator, all manner of wickedness soon rushed in, all ungodliness and unrighteousness, shooting out into crimes of every kind, soon covering the whole face of the earth with all manner of abominations. It would be an endless task, to enumerate all the enormities that broke out. Now the fountains of the great deep were broken up. The earth soon became a field of blood: revenge, cruelty, ambition, with all sorts of injustice, every species of public and private wrongs, were diffused through every part of the earth. Injustice in ten thousand forms, hatred, envy, malice, blood-thirstiness; with every species of falsehood, rode triumphant, till the Creator looking down from heaven, would be no more intreated for an incorrigible race, but swept them off from the face
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of the earth. But how little were the following generations improved, by the severe judgment? They that lived after the flood do not appear to have been a whit better than those that lived before it. In a short time, probably before *Noah* was removed from the earth, all unrighteousness prevailed as before.

2. But is there not a God in the world? Doubtless there is: And it is he that hath made us, not we ourselves. He made us gratuitously, of his own mere mercy: for we could merit nothing of him, before we had a being. It is of his mercy that he made us at all; that he made us sensible, rational creatures, and above all, creatures capable of God. It is this and this alone, which puts the essential difference between men and brutes. But if he has made us, and given us all we have; if we owe all we are and have to him, then surely he has a right to all we are and have, to all our love and obedience. This has been acknowledged by almost all who believed themselves to be his creatures, in all ages and nations. But a few years ago a learned man frankly confessed, "I could never apprehend, that God's having created us, gave him any title to the government of us. Or, that his having created us laid us under any obligation to yield him our obedience." I believe that *Dr. Hutchinson* was the first man,
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that ever made any doubt of this. Or that ever doubted, much less denied, That a creature was obliged to obey his Creator. If Satan ever entertained this thought, (but it is not probable he ever did) it would be no wonder he should rebel against God, and raise war in heaven. And hence would enmity against God arise in the hearts of men also; together with all the branches of ungodliness, which abounded therein at this day. Hence would naturally arise the neglect of every duty which we owe to him, as our Creator, and all the passions and hopes which are directly opposite to every such duty.

3. From the devil, the spirit of independence, self-will and pride, productive of all ungodliness and unrighteousness, quickly infused themselves into the hearts of our first parents in Paradise. After they had eaten of the tree of knowledge, wickedness and misery of every kind, rushed in with a full tide upon the earth, alienated us from God, and made way for all the rest: Atheism, (now fashionably termed *Dissipation*,) and idolatry, love of the world, seeking happiness in this or that creature, covered the whole earth,

Upright both in heart and will,

We by our God were made:

But we turn'd from good to ill,
 And o'er the creatures stray'd :
 Multiplied our wand'ring thought,
 Which first was fixt on God alone,
 In ten thousand objects fought
 The blifs we lost in one.

4. It would be endless to enumerate all the species of wickedness, whether in thought, word, or action, that now overspread the earth, in every nation, and city, and family. They all center in this Atheism, or Idolatry : Pride, either thinking of themselves more highly than they ought to think, or glorying in something which they have received, as tho' they had not received it : Independence and self-will, doing their own will, not the will of him that made them. Add to this, seeking happiness out of God, in gratifying the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life. Hence it is a melancholy truth, that (unless when the Spirit of God has made the difference) *all mankind* now as well as four thousand years ago, " have corrupted their ways before the Lord : and every imagination of the thought of man's heart is evil, only evil, and that continually. However therefore men may differ in their outward ways, in which undoubtedly there are a thousand differences,) yet in the inward root,
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the enmity against God, Atheism, Pride, Self-will, and Idolatry, it is true of all, that *the heart of man, of every natural man, is desperately wicked.*

5. But if this be the case, how is it that every one is not conscious of it? For who should “know the things of a man, like the spirit of a man that is in him?” Why is it that so few know themselves? For this plain reason, Because *the heart* is not only “desperately wicked, but deceitful above all things.” So deceitful, that we may well ask, “Who can know it?” Who indeed, save God that made it? By his assistance, we may, in the second place consider this, the deceitfulness of man’s heart.

II. 1. “It is deceitful above all things,” that is, in the highest degree, above all that we can conceive. So deceitful that the generality of men are continually deceiving both themselves and others. How strangely do they deceive themselves, not knowing either their own tempers or characters. Imagining themselves to be abundantly better and wiser than they are. The ancient Poet supposes, there is no exception to this rule; that no man is willing to know his own heart.—*At nemo in sese tentat descendere, nemo!*—None but those who are taught of God!

2 And if men thus deceive themselves, is it any wonder that they deceive others also, and that we so seldom find an "Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!" In looking over my books some years ago, I found the following memorandum, "I am this day thirty years old, and till this day I know not, that I have met with one person of that age, except in my father's house, who did not use Guile, more or less."

3. This is one of the sorts of desperate wickedness, which cleaves to the nature of every man, proceeding from those fruitful roots, Self-will, Pride and Independence on God. Hence springs every species of vice and wickedness; hence every sin against God, our neighbour and ourselves. Against God: forgetfulness and contempt of God, of his name, his day, his word, his ordinances; Atheism on the one hand, and Idolatry on the other; in particular, Love of the world, the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life; the love of money, the love of power, the love of ease, the love of the "honour that cometh of men," the love of the creature more than the Creator, the being lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Against our neighbour: ingratitude, revenge, hatred, envy, malice, uncharitableness.

4. Hence

4. Hence there is in the heart of every child of man, an inexhaustible fund of ungodliness and unrighteousness, deeply and strongly rooted in the soul, that nothing less than Almighty grace can cure it. From hence naturally arises a plentiful harvest of all evil words and works : and to compleat the whole, that complex of all evils,—

“ That foul monster, war, that we meet
Lays deep the noblest work of the creation,
Which wears in vain its Maker's glorious image,
Unprivileged from Thee ! ”

In the train of this fell monster, are murder, adultery, rape, violence and cruelty of every kind. And all these abominations are not only found in Mahometan or Pagan countries, where their horrid practice may seem to be the natural result of equally horrid principles ; but in those that are called Christian countries, yea, in the most knowing and civilized States and Kingdoms. And let it not be said, this is only the case in Roman Catholic countries. Nay, we that are called Reformed, are not one whit behind them in all manner of wickedness. Indeed no crime ever prevailed among the *Turks* or *Tartars*, which we here cannot parallel in every part of Christendom. Nay, no sin ever appeared in Heathen

or *Papal Rome*, which is not found at this day, in *Germany, France, Holland, England*, and every other Protestant as well as Popish country. So that it might now be said, with as much truth, and as few exceptions, of every Court in *Europe*, as it was formerly in the Court of *Saul*, "There is none righteous, no not one: they are all together become abominable: there is none that understandeth and seeketh after God."

5. But, is there no exception as to the wickedness of man's heart? Yes, in those that are born of God. "He that is born of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." *God has purified his heart by faith*, so that his wickedness is departed from him. "Old things are passed away, and all things (in him) are become new." So that his heart is no longer desperately wicked, but "renewed in righteousness and true holiness." Only let it be remembered, that the heart even of a believer, is not wholly purified when he is justified. Sin is then overcome: but it is not rooted out: it is conquered, but not destroyed. Experience shews him, first, That the root of sin, self-will, pride and idolatry remain still in his heart. But as long as he continues to watch and pray, none of them can prevail against him. Experience teaches him, secondly, that sin (generally pride or self-will) cleaves to his best actions. So that
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even with regard to these, he finds an absolute necessity for the blood of atonement.

6. But how artfully does this conceal itself, not only from others, but even from ourselves. Who can discover it in all the disguises it assumes, or trace it thro' all its latent mazes? And if it be so difficult to know the heart of a good man, who *can know* the heart of a wicked one, which is far more deceitful? No unregenerate man, however sensible, ever so experienced, ever so wise in his generation. And yet these are they who pique themselves upon *knowing the world*, and imagine they *see thro'* all men! Vain men! One may boldly say, they *know nothing yet as they ought to know*. Even that Politician in the late reign neither knew the heart of himself or of other men, whose favourite saying was, "Do not tell me of your virtue or religion: I tell you, every man has his price." Yes, Sir R—; every man like *you*: every one that sells himself to the Devil.

7. Did that right honourable wretch, compared to whom Sir R— was a saint, know the heart of man? He that so earnestly advised his own son, "Never to speak the truth? To lie or dissemble as often as he speaks? To wear a mask continually? That earnestly counselled him, Not to debauch *single women*, (because some inconveniences might follow) but always married

married women." Would one imagine this groveling animal ever had a wife or a married daughter of his own? O rare Lord C——! Did ever man so well deserve, tho' he was a Peer of the Realm, to die by the side of *Newgate*? Or did ever book so well deserve to be burnt by the common hangman as his Letters? Did Mr. *David Hume*, lower, if possible than either of the former, know the heart of man? No more than a worm or a beetle does. After "playing so idly with the darts of death;" do you now find it a laughing matter? What think you now of *Charon*? Has he ferried you over *Styx*? At length he has taught you to know a little of your own heart! At length you know it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!

8. One of the ablest Champions of infidelity (perhaps the most elegant, and the most decent writer, that ever produced a System of Religion, without being in the least obliged to the Bible for it,) breaks out in the fulness of his heart, "Who would not wish that there was full proof of the Christian Revelation, since it is undoubtedly the most benevolent System that ever appeared in the world!" Might he not add a reason of another kind; because without this, man must be altogether a mystery to himself. Even with the help of Revelation, he knows
exceeding

exceeding little. But without it, he would know abundantly less, And nothing with any certainty. Without the light which is given us by the oracles of God, how could we reconcile his greatness with his meanness? While we acknowledged with Sir *John Davies*.

I know my soul has power to know all things,
Yet is she blind and ignorant of all :
I know I'm one of Nature's little Kings,
Yet to the least and vilest things in thrall."

9. Who then knoweth the hearts of all men? Surely none but he that made them. Who knoweth his own heart? Who can tell the depth of its enmity against God? Who knoweth how deeply it is sunk into the nature of satan?

III. 1. From the preceding considerations may we not learn, first, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." For who that is wise would trust one whom he knows to be *desperately wicked*? Especially, whom he hath known, by a thousand experiments, to be *deceitful above all things*? What can we expect, if we still trust a known liar and deceiver, but to be deceived and cheated to the end?

2. We may hence, in the second place, infer the truth of that other reflection of *Solomon*, "Seest thou a man that is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope of a fool than of him." For

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at what distance from wisdom must that man be, who never suspected his want of it? And will not his thinking so well of himself, prevent his receiving instruction from others? Will he not be apt to be displeased at admonition, and to construe reproof into reproach? Will he not therefore be less ready to receive instruction, than even one that has little natural understanding? Surely no fool is so incapable of amendment, as one that imagines himself to be wise. He that supposes himself not to need a Physician, will hardly profit by his advice.

3. May we not learn hence, thirdly, the wisdom of that caution, "Let him who thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall:" Or (to render the text more properly,) *Let him that assuredly standeth take heed lest he fall.* How firmly soever he may stand, he has still a deceitful heart. In how many instances has he been deceived already? And so he may again. Suppose he be not deceived now, does it follow that he never will? Does he not stand upon slippery ground? And is he not surrounded with snares? Into which he may fall and rise no more.

4. Is it not wisdom, for him that is now standing, continually to cry to God, "Search me, O Lord, and prove me; try out my reins and my heart! Look well, if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way
ever-

everlasting?" Thou alone, O God, *knowest* the hearts of all the children of men. O shew thou me what spirit I am of, and let me not deceive my own soul. Let me not *think of myself more highly than I ought to think*. But let me always think soberly, according as thou hast given me the *measure of faith!*

Halifax, April 21, 1790.

A SERMON ON 2 CORINTHIANS IV. 7.

We have this treasure in earthen vessels.

1. **H**OW long was man a mere riddle to himself? For how many ages were the wisest of men utterly unable to reveal the mystery, to reconcile the strange inconsistencies in him, the wonderful mixture of good and evil, of greatness and littleness, of nobleness and barrenness? The more deeply they considered these things, the more they were entangled. The more pains they took in order to clear up the subject, the more they were bewildered in vain, uncertain conjectures.

2. But, what all the wisdom of man was unable to do, was in due time done by the wisdom of God. When it pleased God to give an account of the origin of things, and of man in particular, all the darkness vanished away, and the clear light shone. "God said, Let us make man in our own image." It was done. In the image of God man was made. Hence we are enabled to give a clear satisfactory account of the greatness, the excellency, the dignity of man. But *man being in honour* did not
 continue

continue therein, but rebelled against his sovereign Lord. Hereby he totally lost not only the favour, but likewise the image of God. And *in Adam all died*. For fallen *Adam* begat a son *in his own likeness*. And hence we are taught, to give a clear, intelligible account of the littleness and baseness of man. He is sunk, even below the beasts that perish. Human nature now is not only *sensual* but *devilish*. There is in every man born into the world (what is not in any part of the brute Creation: no beast is fallen so low!) a *carnal mind*, which is *enmity*, direct enmity *against God*.

3. By considering therefore these things in one view, the creation and the fall of man, all the inconsistencies of his nature are easily and fully understood. The greatness and littleness, the dignity and baseness, the happiness and misery of his present state, are no longer a mystery, but clear consequences of his original state, and his rebellion against God. This is the key that opens the whole mystery, that removes all the difficulty, by shewing, what God made man at first, and what man has made himself. It is true, he may regain a considerable measure of "the image of God wherein he was created." But still, whatever we regain, we shall "have this treasure in earthen vessels."

In order to have a clear conception of this, we may enquire, first, *What is the treasure which we now have*; and in the second place consider, *How we have this treasure in earthen vessels.*

I. 1. And first, let us enquire, *What is this treasure which Christian believers have?* I say, believers; for it is of these directly that the Apostle is here speaking. Part of this they have in common with other men, in the remains of the image of God. May we not include herein, first, an immaterial principle, a spiritual nature, endued with understanding, and affections, and a degree of liberty, of a self-moving, yea and self-governing power, (otherwise we were mere machines, stocks and stones.) And secondly, all that is vulgarly called, Natural Conscience, implying some discernment of the difference between moral good and evil, with an approbation of one, and disapprobation of the other, by an inward monitor excusing or accusing? Certainly whether this is natural, or superadded by the grace of God, it is found, at least in some small degree, in every child of man. Something of this is found in every human heart, passing sentence concerning good and evil, not only in all Christians, but in all Mahometans, all Pagans, yea the vilest of Savages.

2. May we not believe, that all Christians, tho' but nominally such, have sometimes at least some desire to please God? As well as some light concerning what does really please him, and some convictions, when they are sensible of displeasing him? Such treasure have all the children of men, more or less, even when they do not yet know God.

3. But it is not these of whom the Apostle is here speaking, neither is this the treasure which is the subject of his discourse. The persons concerning whom he is here speaking, are those that are born of God, those that "being justified by faith, have now redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins: those who enjoy that peace of God, which passeth all understanding; whose soul doth magnify the Lord, and rejoice in him with joy unspeakable; and who feel the "Love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto them." This then is the treasure which they have received, a faith of the operation of God, a peace which sets them above the fear of death, and enables them in every thing to be content: an hope full of immortality, whereby they already "taste of the powers of the world to come;" the love of God shed abroad in their hearts with love to every child of man, and a renewal in the whole image

of God, in all righteousness and true holiness. This is properly and directly the treasure, concerning which the Apostle is here speaking.

II. 1. But this, invaluable as it is, *we have in earthen vessels*. The word is exquisitely proper, denoting both the brittleness of the vessels, and the meanness of the matter they are made of. It directly means what we term *earthen ware*; China, Porcelain, and the like. How weak, how easily broke in pieces! Just such is the case with a holy Christian. We have the heavenly treasure in earthly, mortal, corruptible bodies. "Dust thou art," said the righteous Judge, to his rebellious creature, till then incorruptible and immortal, "and to dust thou shalt return." How finely (but with what a mixture of light and darkness,) does the Hea-then Poet touch upon this change?

*Post ignem etherea domo
Subduxerat.*

"After man had stolen fire from heaven."
(What an emblem of forbidden knowledge.)
Magna & nova februm, &c. that unknown army of consumptions, fevers, sickness, pain of every kind, fixt their camp upon earth, which till then they could no more have entered, than they could scale heaven: and all tended to introduce and pave the way for the last enemy death. From
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the moment that awful sentence was pronounced, the body received the sentence of death in itself: if not from the moment our first parents completed their rebellion, by eating of the forbidden fruit. May we not probably conjecture that there was some quality naturally in this, which sowed the seeds of death in the human body, till then incorruptible and immortal? Be this as it may, it is certain that from this time, "the incorruptible body has pressed down the soul." And no marvel: seeing the soul, during its vital union with the body, cannot exert any of its operations, any otherwise than in union with the body, with its bodily organs. But all of these are more debased and improved by the fall of man, than we can possibly conceive: and the brain, on which the soul more directly depends, not less than the rest of the body. Consequently, if these instruments by which the soul works are disordered; the soul itself must be hindered in its operations. Let a Musician be ever so skilful, he will make but poor music, if his instrument be out of tune. From a disordered brain, (such as is more or less, that [of every child of man,]) there will necessarily arise confoundness of apprehension, shewing itself in a thousand instances, false judgment, the natural result thereof, and wrong inferences: and from these innumerable mistakes will follow, in spite

of all the caution we can use. But mistakes in the judgment will frequently give occasion to mistakes in practice: they will naturally cause our speaking wrong in some instances, and acting wrong in others: nay, they may occasion not only wrong words or actions, but wrong tempers also. If I judge a man to be better than he really is, in consequence I really love him more than he deserves. If I judge another to be worse than he really is, I shall in consequence love him less than he deserves. Now both these are wrong tempers. Yet possibly it may not be in my power to avoid either the one or the other.

2. Such are the unavoidable consequences of having these *treasures in earthen vessels*. Not only death and its forerunners, sickness, weakness and pain, and a thousand infirmities, but likewise error in ten thousand shapes will be always ready to attack us. Such is the present condition of humanity! Such the state of the wisest men! Lord, "what is man, that thou art still mindful of him, or the son of man that thou regardest him!"

3. Something of this great truth, that the "corruptible body presses down the soul," is strongly expressed in those celebrated lines of the ancient Poet: speaking of the souls of men he says,

Igneus

*Ignæus est ollis vigor & celestis origo
Seminibus, quantum non noxia corpora tardant
Terreniq; hebetant artus moribundaq; mem-
bra.*

These seeds of heavenly fire
With strength innate would to their source as-
pire,
But that their earthly limbs obstruct their flight,
And check their soaring to the plains of light.

4. But suppose it pleased the All-wise Creator, for the sin of man, to suffer the souls of men in general, to be weighed down in this miserable manner, by their corruptible body; why does he permit the excellent treasure which he has intrusted to his own children, to be still lodged in these poor earthen vessels? Would not this question naturally occur to any reflecting mind? Perhaps it would; and therefore the apostle immediately furnishes us with a full answer; God has done this, that “the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of us;” that it might be undeniably plain, to whom that excellent power belonged: that no flesh might glory in his sight, but that all who have received this treasure, might continually cry, “Not unto us, but unto thee, O Lord, be the praise, for thy name and for thy truth’s sake.”

5. Undoubtedly this was the main design of God, in this wonderful dispensation, to humble man, to make and keep him little and poor, and base and vile in his own eyes. And whatever we suffer hereby, we are well repaid, if it be a means of *hiding pride from man*; of laying us low in the dust, even then, when we are most in danger of being lifted up by the excellent gifts of God.

6. Nay, if we suffer hereby, from the mean habitation of the immortal spirit; if pain, sickness, and numberless other afflictions beside, to which we should not otherwise have been liable, assault us on every side, and at length bear us down into the dust of death: what are we losers by this? Losers! No, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us:" come on then, disease, weakness, pain: afflictions (in the language of men.) Shall we not be infinite gainers by them? Gainers for ever and ever! Seeing "these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!"

7. And are we not by the consciousness of our present weakness effectually taught wherein our strength lies? How loud does it proclaim, "Trust in the Lord Jehovah, for in him is

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everlasting strength?" Trust in him who suffered a thousand times more than ever you can suffer! Hath he not all power in heaven and in earth! Then what tho'

The heavenly treasure now we have

In a vile house of clay!

Yet he shall to the utmost save,

And keep it to that day.

Potta, June 17, 1790.

A SERMON

A SERMON ON EPHESIANS II. 12.

Without God in the world.

1. **P**ERHAPS these words might be more properly translated "Atheists in the world." This seems to be a little stronger expression, than "without God in the world," which sounds nearly negative, and does not necessarily imply any more, than the having no fellowship or intercourse with God. On the contrary, the word *Atheist* is commonly understood to mean something *positive*, and not only disclaiming any intercourse with him, but denying his very Being.

2. The case of these unhappy men may be much illustrated by a late incident; the truth of which cannot reasonably be doubted, there having been so large a number of eye witnesses. An antient Oak being cut down and split through the midst, out of the very heart of the tree, crept a large toad, and walked away, with all the speed he could. Now how long, may we probably imagine, had this creature continued there? It is not unlikely it might have remained in its nest above a hundred years. It is not improbable, it

was

was nearly, if not altogether, coeval with the Oak; having been some way or other inclosed therein, at the time that it was planted. It is not therefore unreasonable to suppose, that it had lived that strange kind of life, at least a century. We say, *it had lived!* But what manner of life? How desirable! How enviable! As Cowley says,

“ O Life, most precious and most dear!

O Life, that Epicures would long to share!”

Let us spend a few thoughts upon so uncommon a case, and make some improvement of it.

3. This poor animal had organs of sense: yet it had not any sensation. It had eyes, yet no ray of light ever entered its black abode. From the very first instant of its existence there, it was shut up in impenetrable darkness. It was shut up from the sun, moon and stars, and from the beautiful face of nature. Indeed from the whole visible world, as much as if it had no being.

4. As no air could penetrate its sable recess, it consequently could have no *hearing*. Whatever organs it was provided with, they could be of no use: seeing no undulating air could find a way, through the walls that surrounded it. And there is no reason to believe, that it had any sense analogous to those either of *smelling* or *tasting*. In a creature, which did not need any food,
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the second would have been of no possible use. Neither was there any way, whereby the objects of smell or taste could make their approach to it. It must be very little if at all, that it could be acquainted even with the general sense that of *feeling*: as it always continued in one unvaried posture amidst the parts that surrounded it, all of these being immoveably fixt, could make no new impression upon it. So that it had only one feeling from hour to hour, and from day to day, during its whole duration.

5. And as this poor animal was destitute of *sensation*, it must have equally been destitute of *reflection*. Its head, (of whatever sort it was,) having no materials to work upon, no ideas of sensation of any kind, could not produce any degree of reflection. It scarce therefore could have any *memory*, or any *imagination*. Nor could it have any locative *Power*, while it was so closely bound in on every side. If it had in itself some springs of motion, yet it was impossible that power should be exerted, because the narrowness of its cavern could not allow of any change of place.

6. How exact a parallel may be drawn between this creature (hardly to be called an animal) and a man that is *without God in the world*? Such as are a vast majority of even those that are called Christians! I do not mean that they are
Atheists,

Atheists, in the common sense of the word. I do not believe, that these are so numerous as many have imagined. Making all the enquiry and observation I could for upwards of fifty years, I could not find twenty who seriously disbelieved the being of a God: nay, I have found only two of these, (to the best of my judgment,) in the *British* Islands: both of these then lived in *London*, and had been of this persuasion many years. But several years before they were called to appear before God, both *John S*—— and *John B*—— were fully convinced, That there is a God, and what is more remarkable, they were first convinced that he is a terrible, and then, that he is a merciful God. I mention these two accounts, to shew, not only that there are real literal *Atheists* in the world! but also, that even then if they will condescend to ask it, they may find “grace to help in time of need.”

7. But I do not mean such as these, when I speak of those who are *Atheists*, or “without God in the world.” But of such as are only practical *Atheists*, as have not God in all their thoughts: such as have not acquainted themselves with him, neither have any fellowship with him: such as have no more intercourse with God or the invisible world, than this ani-

mal had with the visible. I will endeavour to draw the parallel between these. And may God apply it to their hearts !

8. Every one of these is in exactly such a situation with regard to the invisible, as the toad was in respect to the visible world. That creature had undoubtedly a sort of life, such as it was. It certainly had all the internal and external parts, that are essential to animal life. And without question it had suitable juices, which kept up a kind of circulation. This was a life indeed ! And exactly such a life is that of the *Atheist* ; the man without God in the world. What a thick veil is between him and the invisible world ! Which with regard to him is as tho' it had no being. He has not the least perception of it ; not the most distant idea. He has not the least sight of God, the intellectual Sun ; nor any the least attraction toward him, or desire to have any knowledge of his ways : although his light be gone forth into all lands, and his sound into the end of the world, yet he *beareth* no more thereof than of the fabled music of the spheres. He *tastes* nothing of the goodness of God ; or the powers of the world to come. He does not *feel* (as our Church speaks) the working of the Holy Spirit in his heart. In a word, he has no more intercourse with, or know-

knowledge of the spiritual world, than this poor creature had of the natural, while shut up in its dark inclosure.

9. But the moment the Spirit of the Almighty strikes the heart of him that was till then without God in the world, it breaks the hardness of his heart, and creates all things new. The Sun of Righteousness appears, and shines upon his soul, shewing him the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He is in a new world. All things round him are become new. Such as it never before entered into his heart to conceive. He sees, so far as his newly opened eyes can bear the sight,

“ The opening heavens around him shine,
With beams of sacred bliss.”

He sees, that he has “an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and that he has redemption in his blood, the remission of sins.” He sees a “new way that is opened into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus; and his light shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

10. By the same gracious stroke, he that before had ears but heard not, is now made capable of *hearing*. He hears the voice that raiseth the dead, the voice of him that is the Resurrec-

tion and the Life. He is no longer deaf to his invitations or commands, to his promises or threatnings, but gladly hears every word that proceeds out of his mouth: and governs thereby all his thoughts, words, and actions.

11. At the same time he receives other spiritual senses, capable of discerning spiritual good and evil. He is enabled to *taste* as well as to see, how gracious the Lord is. He enters into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, and tastes of the powers of the world to come. He finds Jesus' love far better than wine, yea sweeter than honey or the honey-comb. He knows what that meaneth, "all thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia." He *feels* the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him: or, as our church expresses it, "feels the workings of the Spirit of God in his heart." Mean time it may easily be observed, that the substance of all these figurative expressions is comprized in that one word Faith, taken in its widest sense: being enjoyed more or less, by every one that believes in the name of the Son of God. This change from spiritual death to spiritual life, is properly the New Birth: all the particulars whereof are admirably well exprest by Dr. *Watts* in one verse,

"Renew

“ Renew my eyes, open my ears,
 And form my soul afresh ;
 Give me new passions, joys, and fears,
 And turn the stone to flesh.”

12. But before this universal change, there may be many partial changes in a natural man, which are frequently mistaken for it, whereby many say peace, peace, to their soul, when there is no peace. There may be not only a considerable change in the life, so as to refrain from open sin, yea the easily besetting sin : but also a considerable change of tempers, conviction of sin, strong desires and good resolutions. And here we have need to take great care, not, on the one hand to despise the day of small things, nor on the other, to mistake any of these partial changes, for that entire, general change the New Birth ; that total change, from the image of the earthly *Adam*, into the image of the heavenly, from an earthly, sensual, devilish mind, into the mind that was in Christ.

13. Settle it therefore in your hearts, that however you may be changed in many other respects, yet in Christ Jesus, that is, according to the christian institution, nothing will avail, without the whole mind that was in Christ, enabling you to walk as Christ walked. Nothing is more sure than this, “ If any man

be in Christ," a true believer in him, "he is a new creature: old things in him are passed away, all things are become new."

14. From hence we may clearly perceive, the wide difference there is between Christianity and Morality. Indeed nothing can be more sure than that true Christianity cannot exist, without both the inward experience, and outward practice of justice, mercy and truth; and this alone is given in morality. But it is equally certain, that all morality, all the justice, mercy and truth, which can possibly exist without christianity, profiteth nothing at all, is of no value in the sight of God, to those that are under the christian dispensation." Let it be observed, I purposely add, to those that are under the christian dispensation, because I have no authority from the word of God, "to judge those that are without:" Nor do I conceive, that any man living has a right to sentence all the Heathen and Mahometan world to damnation. It is far better, to leave them to Him that made them, and who is "the Father of the spirits of all flesh:" who is the God of the Heathens, as well as the Christians, and who hateth nothing that he hath made. But mean time, this is nothing to those that name the name of Christ: all those being *under the law*, the christian law, shall undoubtedly be judged thereby. And of con-

consequence, unless those be so changed as was the animal above mentioned, unless they have new senses, ideas, passions, tempers, they are no christians! However just, true, or merciful they may be, they are but *Atheists* still.

15. Perhaps there may be some well-meaning persons, who carry this farther still: whoever, whatever change is wrought in men, whether in their hearts or lives, yet if they have not clear views of those capital doctrines, the Fall of man, Justification by faith, and of the atonement made by the death of Christ, and of his righteousness transferred to them, they can have no benefit from his death. I dare in no wise affirm this. Indeed I do not believe it. I believe the merciful God regards the lives and tempers of men more than their ideas. I believe he respects the goodness of the heart, rather than the clearness of the head: and that if the heart of a man be filled (by the grace of God, and the power of his Spirit) with the humble, gentle, patient love of God and man, God will not cast him into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: because his ideas are not clear, or because his conceptions are confused: without holiness, I own, no man shall see the Lord: but I dare not add, or clear ideas.

16. But

16. But to return to the text. Let me intreat all of you who are still "without God in the world," to consider with all your humanity, benevolence, virtue, you are still

"Inclusi tenebris, & carcere cæco."

Inclosed in darkness and infernal shade.

My dear friends, you do not see God. You do not see the Sun of Righteousness. You have no fellowship with the Father, or with his Son, Jesus Christ. You never heard the voice that raiseth the dead. Ye know not the voice of your Shepherd. Ye have not received the Holy Ghost. Ye have no spiritual senses. You have your old, natural ideas, passions, joys and fears: you are not new creatures. O cry to God, that he may rend the veil which is still upon your hearts! And which gives you occasion to complain,

"O dark, dark, dark! I still must say,
Amidst the blaze of gospel-day!"

O that you may this day hear his voice, who speaketh as never man spake, saying, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee!" Is it not *his* voice that crieth aloud, "Look unto me, and be thou saved!" He saith, "Lo! I come!" "Even so, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!"

Retherham, July 6, 1790.

A SERMON

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A SERMON ON PSALM LXII. 10.

*If riches increase, set not thine heart upon them.*

1. FROM that express declaration of our Lord, "It is easier for a camel to go thro' the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven," we may easily learn, that none can *have* riches, without being greatly endangered by them. But if the danger of barely having them is so great, how much greater is the danger of *increasing* them? This danger is great even to those who receive what is transmitted to them by their forefathers: but it is abundantly greater to those who acquire them by their skill and industry. Therefore nothing can be more prudent than this caution, "If riches increase, set not thine heart upon them."

2. It is true, riches and the increase of them, are the gift of God. Yet great care is to be taken, that what is intended for a blessing, do not turn into a curse. To prevent which, it is highly expedient to consider seriously, First, What is meant by *riches*, and when they may be said to *increase*. Secondly, What is implied  
in

in *setting our hearts upon them*, and how we may avoid it.

I. Consider first, What is here meant by *riches*. Indeed some may imagine, that it is hardly possible to mistake the meaning of this common word. Yet in truth, there are thousands in this mistake; and many of them quite innocently. A person of note hearing a sermon preached upon this subject several years since, between surprize and indignation broke out aloud, "Why does he talk about riches here? There is no rich man at *Whitehaven*, but Sir James L." And it is true, there was none but he that had forty thousand pounds a year, and some millions in ready money. But a man may be rich that has not a hundred a year, nor even one thousand pounds in cash. Whosoever has food to eat and raiment to put on, with something over, is rich. Whoever has the necessaries and conveniencies of life for himself and his family, and a little to spare for them that have not, is properly a rich man. Unless he is a miser, a lover of money, one that hoards up what he can, and ought to give to the poor. For if so, he is a poor man still, tho' he has millions in the bank: yea, he is the poorest of men; for

"The beggars but a common lot deplore:

"The rich poor man's emphatically poor."

2. But



2. But here an exception may be made. A person may have more than necessities and conveniences for his family, and yet not be rich. For he may be in debt; and his debts may amount to more than he is worth. But if this be the case, he is not a rich man, how much money soever he has in his hands. Yea, a man of business may be afraid, that this is the real condition of his affairs, whether it be or no: And then he cannot be so charitable as he would, for fear of being unjust. How many that are engaged in trade, are in this very condition? Those especially that trade to a very large amount? For their affairs are frequently so entangled, that it is not possible to determine with any exactness how much they are worth, or indeed whether they are worth any thing or nothing. Should we not make a fair allowance for them?

3. And beware of forming a hasty judgment concerning the fortune of others. There may be secrets in the situation of a person, which few but God are acquainted with. Some years since, I told a gentleman, "Sir, I am afraid you are covetous." He asked me, What is the reason of your fear? I answered, "A year ago, when I made a collection for the expence of repairing the Foundry, you subscribed five guineas. At the subscription made this year, you sub-

subscribed only half a guinea." He made no reply; but after a time asked, "Pray, Sir, answer me a question. Why do you live upon potatoes?" (I did so between three and four years.) I replied, "It has much conduced to my health." He answered, "I believe it has. But did you not do it likewise to save money?" I said, "I did, for what I save from my own *meat*, will feed another that else would have none." "But Sir," said he, "if this be your motive, you may save much more. I know a man that goes to the market, at the beginning of every week. There he buys a pennyworth of parsnips, which he boils in a large quantity of water. The parsnips serve him for food, and the water for drink the ensuing week. So his meat and drink together cost him only a penny a week." This he constantly did, tho' he had then two hundred pounds a year; to pay the debts which he had contracted, before he knew God!—And this was he, whom I had set down for a covetous man!

4. But there are those who are conscious before God that they are rich. And doubtless some among *you* are of the number. You have more of the goods of this world than is needful either for yourself or your family. Let each consider for himself. Do *your* riches increase? Do not you understand that plain expression?

Have

Have you not more money or more of money's worth, than you had ten or twenty years ago? Or at this time last year? If you keep any account, you can easily know this. Indeed you ought to know; otherwise you are not a good steward, even in this respect, of the mammon of unrighteousness. And every man whether engaged in trade or not, ought to know, whether his substance lessens or increases.

5. But many have found out a way never to be rich, tho' their substance increase ever so much. It is this. As fast as ever money comes in, they lay it out, either in land or enlarging their business. By this means each of these, keeping himself bare of money, can still say, "I am not rich." Yea, tho' he has ten, twenty, a hundred times more substance, than he had some years ago. This may be explained by a recent case. A Gentleman came to a merchant in *London* a few years since, and told him, "Sir, I beg you will give me a guinea, for a worthy family in great distress." He replied, "Really, Mr. M. I cannot well afford to give you it just now. But if you will call upon me when I am worth ten thousand pounds, upon such an occasion, I will give you ten guineas." Mr. M. after some time called upon him again, and said, "Sir, I claim your promise, now you are worth ten thousand pounds." He replied, "That is very



true. But I assure you, I cannot spare one guinea so well as I could then."

6. It is possible, for a man to cheat himself, by this ingenious device. And he may cheat other men: for as long "as thou doest good unto thyself, men will speak well of thee." "A right *good man*, says the *Londoner*: he is worth a plumb: a hundred thousand pounds." But alas! he cannot deceive the devil. Ah no! The curse of God is upon thee already, and all that thou hast. And to morrow, when the devil seizes thy soul, will he not say, "What do all thy riches profit thee? Will they purchase a pillow for thy head, in the lake of fire burning with brimstone? Or will they procure thee a cup of water to cool thy tongue, while thou art tormented in that flame?" O follow the wise direction here given, that God may not say unto thee, "Thou fool."

7. This shift therefore will not avail. It will not be any protection, either against the wrath of God, or the malice and power of the devil. Thou art convicted already of *setting thy heart* upon thy riches, if thou layest all thou hast, above the conveniencies of life, on adding money to money, house to house, or field to field; without giving at least a tenth of thine income (the *Jewish* proportion) to the poor. By whatsoever means thy riches increase, whether  
with

with or without labour; whether by trade, legacies, or any other way, unless thy charities increase in the same proportion, unless thou givest a full tenth of thy substance, of thy fixt and occasional income, thou dost undoubtedly set thy heart upon thy gold, and it will *eat thy flesh as fire*

8. But O! who can convince a rich man that he sets his heart upon riches? For considerably above half a century I have spoken on this head, with all the plainness that was in my power. But with how little effect! I doubt whether I have in all that time convinced fifty misers of covetousness. When the lover of money was described ever so clearly, and painted in the strongest colours, who applied it to himself? To whom did God and all that knew him say, *Thou art the man?* If he speaks to any of you that are present, O do not stop your ears! Rather say with *Zaccheus*, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: And if I have done any wrong to any man, I restore fourfold!” He did not mean that he had done this in time past; but that he determined to do so for the time to come. I charge thee before God, thou lover of money, to *go and do likewise!*

9. I have a message from God unto thee, O rich man, whether thou wilt hear, or whether

thou wilt forbear. Riches have increased with thee : at the peril of thy soul, "set not thine heart upon them." Be thankful to Him that gave thee such a talent, so much power of doing good. Yet dare not to rejoice over them, but with fear and trembling. *Cave ne inher eas*, says pious *Kempis*, *ne capiaris & pereas*. Beware thou cleave not unto them, lest thou be entangled and perish. Do not make them thy end, thy chief delight ; thy happiness, thy God ! See that thou expect not happiness in money, nor any thing that is purchasable thereby : in gratifying either the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, or the pride of life.

10. But let us descend to particulars : And see that each of you deal faithfully with his own soul. If any of you have now twice, thrice, or four times as much substance as when you first saw my face, faithfully examine yourselves, and see if you do not set your hearts, if not directly on money or riches themselves, yet on some of the things that are purchasable thereby, which comes to the same thing. All those the Apostle *John* includes under that general name, *the world* : and the desire of them, or to seek happiness in them, under that form, "the love of the world." This he divides into three branches, "The desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life." Fairly examine



amine yourselves with regard to these. And first, as to "the desire of the flesh." I believe this means the seeking of happiness in the things that gratify the senses. To instance in one, Do not you seek your happiness in enlarging the pleasure of *feasting*? To be more particular, Do you not *eat* more plentifully or more delicately than you did ten or twenty years ago? Do not you use more *drink*, or drink of a more *costly* kind, than you did then? Do you sleep on as hard a bed as you did once, suppose your health will bear it? To touch on one point more; Do you *fast* as often now you are rich, as you did when you was poor? Ought you not in all reason to do this, rather more often than more seldom? I am afraid, your own heart condemns you. You are not clear in this matter.

II. The second branch of the love of the world, "the desire of the eyes," is of a wider extent. We may understand thereby, The seeking our happiness in gratifying the imagination, (which is chiefly done by means of the eyes) by grand, or new, or beautiful objects. If they may not all be reduced to one head: Since neither grand, nor beautiful objects are pleasing, when the novelty of them is gone. But are not the veryest trifles pleasing as long as they are new? Do not some of you on the

score of novelty, seek no small part of your happiness in that trifle of trifles, dress? Do not you bestow more money, or (which is the same) more time or pains upon it, than you did once? I doubt this is not done to please God. Then it pleases the devil. If you laid aside your needless ornaments some years since, ruffles, necklaces, spider-caps, ugly, unbecoming bonnets, costly linen, expensive laces, have you not, in defiance of religion and reason, taken to them again?

12. Perhaps you say, "You can now *afford* the expence. This is the quintessence of nonsense. Who gave you this addition to your fortune? Or (to speak properly) *lent* it to you? To speak more properly still, Who lodged it for a time in your hands as his *stewards*? Informing you at the same time, for *what* purposes he intrusted you with it? And can you *afford* to waste your Lord's goods, for every part of which you are to give an account? Or to expend them in any other way than that which he hath expressly appointed? Away with this vile, diabolical cant! Let it never more come out of your lips. This *affording* to rob God, is the very cant of hell. Do not you know, that God *intrusted* you with that money (all above what buys necessaries for your families) to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to help the stranger,

stranger, the widow, the fatherless; and indeed as far as it will go, to relieve the wants of all mankind? How can you, how dare you defraud your Lord, by applying it to any other purpose? When he intrusted you with a little, did he not intrust you with it that you might lay out all that little in doing good? And when he intrusted you with more, did he not intrust you with that additional money that you might do so much the more good, as you had more ability? Had you any more right to waste a pound, a shilling, or a penny, than you had before? You have, therefore, no more right to gratify the desire of the flesh, or the desire of the eyes now, than when you was a beggar. O no! Do not make so poor a return to your beneficent Lord! Rather the more he entrusts you with, be so much the more careful to employ every mite as he hath appointed.

13. Ye angels of God, ye servants of his, that continually do his pleasure; our common Lord hath intrusted you also with talents, far more precious than gold and silver, that you may minister in your various offices to the heirs of salvation. Do not you employ every mite of what you have received, to the end for which it was given you? And hath he not directed us, to do his will on earth, *as it is done by you in heaven*? Brethren, what are we doing?



ing? Let us awake! Let us arise! Let us imitate those flaming ministers! Let us employ our whole soul, body and substance, according to the will of our Lord. Let us render unto God the things that are God's, even all we are and all we have!

14. Most of those, who when riches increase set their hearts upon them, do it indirectly, in some of the preceding instances. But there are others who do this more directly, being properly *lovers of money*; who love it for its own sake, not only for the sake of what it procures. But this vice is very rarely found in children or young persons; but only or chiefly in the old; in those that have the least need of money, and the least time to enjoy it. Might not this induce one to think, that in many cases it is a penal evil? That it is a sin-punishing evil? That when a man has for many years hid his precious talent in the earth, God delivers him up to satan, to punish by the inordinate love of it? Then it is that he is more and more tormented by that *auri sacra fames*! That execrable hunger after gold, which can never be satisfied! No. It is most true, as the very heathen observes:—*Crescit amor nummi, quantum ipsa pecunia crescit.*—As money, so the love of money grows: It increases in the same proportion. As in a dropsy, the more you drink, the more

you

you thirst ; till that unquenchable thirst plunge you into the fire, which never shall be quenched.

15. But is there no way, you may ask, either to prevent or to cure this dire disease ? There is one preventative of it, which is also a remedy for it : and I believe there is no other under heaven. It is this. After you have *gained* (with the cautions above given) *all you can*, and *saved all you can*, wanting for nothing : Spend not one pound, one shilling, or one penny, to gratify either the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, or the pride of life ; or indeed, for any other end than to please and glorify God. Having avoided this rock on the right hand, beware of that on the left. Secondly, *hoard nothing*. Lay up no treasure on earth, but *give all you can*, that is, all you have. I defy all the men upon earth, yea all the angels in heaven, to find any other way of extracting the poison from riches.

16. Let me add one word more. After having served you between sixty and seventy years ; with dim eyes, shaking hands, and tottering feet, I give you one more advice before I sink into the dust. Mark those words of St Paul. *Those that desire or endeavour to be rich, that moment fall into temptation*, yea a deep gulph of temptation, out of which nothing less than Almighty Power can deliver them. *They fall into a snare: the*  
word

word properly means a *steel trap*, which instantly crushes the animal taken to pieces: "and into divers foolish and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and perdition." You, above all men, who now prosper in the world, never forget these awful words! How unspeakably slippery is your path! How dangerous every step! The Lord God enable you to see your danger, and make you deeply sensible of it. O may you "awake up after his likeness and be satisfied with it!"

17. Permit me to come a little closer still. Perhaps I may not trouble you any more on this head. I am pained for you that are *rich in this world*. Do you give all you can? You who receive five hundred pounds a year, and spend only two hundred, do you give three hundred back to God? If not, you certainly rob God of that three hundred. You that receive two hundred, and spend but one, do you give God the other hundred? If not, you rob him of just so much. "Nay, may I not do what I will with *my own*?" Here lies the ground of your mistake. It is not your *own*. It cannot be, unless you are Lord of heaven and earth. "However I must provide for my children." Certainly. But how? By making them rich? Then you will probably make them heathens, as some of you have done already. "What shall I do then?"

Lord,



Lord, speak to their hearts! Else the Preacher speaks in vain. Leave them enough to live on, not in idleness and luxury, but by honest industry. And if you have not children, upon what scriptural or rational principle, can you leave a groat behind you, more than will bury you? I pray consider: What are you the better for what you leave behind you? What does it signify; whether you leave behind you ten thousand pounds, or ten thousand shoes and boots? O! leave nothing behind you! Send all you have before you into a better world! Lend it, lend it all unto the Lord, and it shall be paid you again! Is there any danger that *his* truth should fail? It is fixt as the pillars of heaven. Haste, Haste, my Brethren, haste! lest you be called away, before you have settled what you have on this security! When this is done, you may boldly say, "Now I have nothing to do but to die! Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit! Come Lord Jesus. Come quickly."

*Bristol, Sept. 21, 1790.*

*FINIS.*

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